



**Submitted Date:** 9/22/2010 3:04:09 PM

**Easygrants ID:** 410

<b>Funding Opportunity:</b> Category One	<b>Applicant Organization:</b> Upper Merced River Watershed Council
<b>Task:</b> Submit Application Non-EO	<b>Applicant Name:</b> Ms. Donna Brownell



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PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION	
<b>Name</b>	Ms. Donna Brownell,
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	Upper Merced River Watershed Council
<b>Primary Address</b>	P.O. Box 5008-201, , , Mariposa, CA, 95338
<b>Primary Phone/Fax</b>	209-966-3155 Ext.
<b>Primary Email</b>	info@arts-mariposa.org

<b>Name</b>	Ms. Donna Brownell,
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	Upper Merced River Watershed Council
<b>Primary Address</b>	P.O. Box 5008-201, , , Mariposa, CA, 95338
<b>Primary Phone/Fax</b>	209-966-3155 Ext.
<b>Primary Email</b>	info@arts-mariposa.org



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#### PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>Project Title</b>	Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor
<b>Brief Description</b>	To remove yellow starthistle and italian thistle from riparian habitat along the Upper Merced River, approximately 80 acres of sensitive riparian habitat and to stop the spread of these invasives.
<b>Total Requested Amount</b>	192,269.60
<b>Other Fund Proposed</b>	.00
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	192,269.60
<b>Project Category</b>	Site Improvement/Restoration
<b>Project Area/Size</b>	n/a
<b>Project Area Type</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Have you submitted to SNC this fiscal year?</b>	No
<b>Is this application related to other SNC funding?</b>	No

#### Project Results

Restoration

<b>Project Purpose</b>	<b>Project Purpose Percent</b>
Historical/Cultural	

**County**



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Mariposa
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<b>Sub Region</b>
South Central





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### PROJECT OTHER CONTACTS INFORMATION

#### Other Grant Project Contacts

Name:	Donna Brownell,
Project Role:	Authorized Representative
Phone:	2099663155
Phone Ext:	
E-mail:	info@arts-mariposa.org

Name:	Liana Lopez,
Project Role:	Day-to-Day Responsibility
Phone:	2099662221
Phone Ext:	
E-mail:	watershed@sti.net

Name:	Mark Rowney,
Project Role:	Water Agency 1 Contact
Phone:	2099662515
Phone Ext:	
E-mail:	mpud@sti.net

Name:	Rick Benson,
Project Role:	County Administration
Phone:	0000
Phone Ext:	
E-mail:	rinman@mariposacounty.org



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## PROJECT LOCATION INFORMATION

### Project Location

Address:	Briceburg Rd, , , Midpines, CA, 95345 United States
Water Agency:	Mariposa Public Utility District
Latitude:	373628.37
Longitude:	12000.30
Congressional District:	n/a
Senate:	n/a
Assembly:	n/a
Within City Limits:	No
City Name:	



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### PROJECT BUDGET INFORMATION

#### Direct

Description	Num of Units	Per Unit Cost	Total
Staff-Project Mgt Staff Wages	684	40.00	27,360.00
Staff-Field Mgt Staff Wages	972	40.00	38,880.00
Staff-Federal & State Deductions	1	9,936.00	9,936.00
Travel-Mileage Weed Mtgs	1080	.50	540.00
Travel-Mileage Project Sites	2508	.50	1,254.00
Contracts-CDC Crews	40	225.00	9,000.00
Contracts-ACE Crews	60	1,100.00	66,000.00
Equipment-Hand tools, weed eaters	1	2,200.00	2,200.00
Equipment-GPS unit & software	1	800.00	800.00

# SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

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<b>Total Direct</b>	155,970.00
<b>Direct Detail</b>	

## Indirect

Description	Num of Units	Per Unit Cost	Total
Staff-Workers' Comp Prj Mgt	1	410.40	410.40
Staff-Workers' Comp Field Staff	1	6,415.20	6,415.20
Printed Materials	1	200.00	200.00
Outreach-Presenter's Fee	2	100.00	200.00
Outreach-Facility Rental	2	200.00	400.00
Liability Insurance	3	1,200.00	3,600.00

<b>Total Indirect</b>	11,225.60
<b>Indirect Detail</b>	

## Administration

Description	Num of Units	Per Unit Cost	Total
Rent	12	625.00	7,500.00
Utilities	12	65.00	780.00



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Phone & Internet	12	190.00	2,280.00
Copy Machine	9	106.00	954.00
Office Supplies	3	40.00	120.00
Bookkeeping & Clerical	336	40.00	13,440.00

<b>Total Administration</b>	25,074.00
<b>Administration Detail</b>	

<b>Budget Grant Total:</b> 192,269.60
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#### PROJECT OTHER SUPPORT INFORMATION

Other Support for the Sierra Nevada

<b>Estimated Total Amount of Resources Leveraged</b>	
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## PROJECT REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

### Regulatory Requirements

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### PROJECT TIMELINE INFORMATION

#### Project Timeline

Milestone/Activity:	Treatment areas identified and implementation plan
Description:	developed, adjusted as needed
Expected Date:	03/31/2013
Deliverable:	True

Milestone/Activity:	Tools and equipment purchased
Description:	
Expected Date:	03/31/2013
Deliverable:	True

Milestone/Activity:	Crews hired, trained, supervised
Description:	through collaboration with agencies
Expected Date:	08/31/2013
Deliverable:	True

Milestone/Activity:	YST and Italian thistle pulled/mowed using crews
Description:	
Expected Date:	08/31/2013
Deliverable:	True

Milestone/Activity:	Outreach accomplished three articles published
Description:	(displays, local media, presentations)
Expected Date:	10/31/2011
Deliverable:	True

Milestone/Activity:	Outreach accomplished three articles published
Description:	
Expected Date:	10/31/2012
Deliverable:	True





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Milestone/Activity:	Outreach accomplished three articles published
Description:	
Expected Date:	10/31/2013
Deliverable:	True
Milestone/Activity:	Local invasive meetings/trainings attended
Description:	8 per year between 2/2011 and 2/2013
Expected Date:	02/28/2013
Deliverable:	False
Milestone/Activity:	Photos, maps, transects (pre/post data) submitted
Description:	
Expected Date:	10/31/2013
Deliverable:	True
Milestone/Activity:	Progress Reports written and submitted
Description:	9/2011 & every 6 months thereafter
Expected Date:	03/31/2013
Deliverable:	True
Milestone/Activity:	Final Report written and submitted
Description:	
Expected Date:	11/30/2013
Deliverable:	True



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## PROJECT PEER REVIEWER INFORMATION

### Reviewers

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### UPLOADS

The following pages contain the following uploads provided by the applicant:

Upload Name
Completed Checklist
Table of Contents
Application Form
Authorization to Apply or Resolution
Articles of Incorporation (Non-Profit Organization
Articles of Incorporation (Non-Profit Organization
Articles of Incorporation (Non-Profit Organization
Articles of Incorporation (Non-Profit Organization
Bylaws (Non-Profit Organizations Only)
IRS Tax Letter (Non-Profit Organizations Only)

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Project Summary
Evaluation Criteria Narrative
Detailed Budget Form
Performance Measures
Environmental Setting and Impacts
Project Location Map
Topographic Map
Site Plan - Only Site Improv. or Restoration Proj.
Photos of the Project Site
Photos of the Project Site
Photos of the Project Site
Land Tenure- Only for Site Improvement Projects

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CEQA Documentation
NEPA Documentation
NEPA Documentation
Letters of Support
Letters of Support
Letters of Support
Letters of Support
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Letters of Support
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Letters of Support
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To preserve the integrity of the uploaded document, headers, footers and page numbers have not been added by the system.

## Application Checklist for Category One Grants

Project Name: Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor

Applicant: Upper Merced River Watershed Council

Please mark each box: check if item is included in the application; mark "N/A" if not applicable to the project. Please consult with SNC staff prior to submission if you have any questions about the applicability to your project of any items on the checklist. All applications must include a CD including an electronic file of each checklist item, if applicable. The naming convention for each electronic file is listed after each item on the checklist. (Electronic File Name = EFN: "naming convention". file extension choices)

1. ☒ Completed Checklist (EFN: *Checklist.doc,.docx,.rtf, or .pdf*)
2. ☒ Table of Contents (EFN: *TOC.doc,.docx,.rtf, or .pdf*)
3. ☒ Application Form (EFN: *AppForm.doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf*)
4. ☒ Authorization to Apply or Resolution (EFN: *AuthRes. doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf*)
- 5a. ☒ Articles of Incorporation [501(c)(3)s only] (EFN: *ArtInc.doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf*)
- 5b. ☒ Bylaws [501(c)(3)s only] (EFN: *Bylaws.doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf*)
- 5c. ☒ Tax Exempt Status Letter from the Internal Revenue Service [501(c)(3)s only] (EFN: *IRS.doc,.docx,.rtf,.pdf*)
6. ☒ Project Summary (Two page maximum) (ENF: *ProjSum.doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf*)
7. ☒ Evaluation Criteria Narrative (ENF: *EvalCrit.doc, .docx, .rtf, .pdf*)
8. ☒ Detailed Budget Form (ENF: *Budget.xls, .xlsx*)
9. ☒ Long Term Management Plan (no EFN - included in the Evaluation Criteria Narrative)
10. ☒ Performance Measures (ENF: *Perform.doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf*)
11. ☒ Environmental Setting and Impacts (ENF: *EnvSetImp.docx, .rtf, .pdf*)
12. ☒ Project Location Map (ENF: *LocMap.pdf*)
13. ☐ Parcel Map showing County Assessor's Parcel Number(s) **N/A federal property**
14. ☒ Topographic Map (ENF: *Topo.pdf*)
15. ☒ Site Plan (Site improvement/restoration projects) (ENF: *SitePlan.pdf*)
16. ☒ Photos of the Project Site (10 maximum) (ENF: *Photo.jpg, .gif*)
17. ☐ Acquisition Schedule (Acquisition projects) (ENF: *AcqSched.doc,.docx,.rtf,.pdf*) **N/A**
18. ☐ Willing Seller Letter (Acquisition projects) (ENF: *WillSell.pdf*) **N/A**
19. ☒ Land Tenure (For site improvement/restoration projects)
20. ☐ Leases or Agreements (ENF: *LeaseAgrmnt.pdf*) **N/A federal property**
21. ☒ California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation (ENF: *CEQA.pdf*)
22. ☒ National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation (ENF: *NEPA.pdf*)
23. ☐ Regulatory Requirements / Permits (ENF: *RegPermit.pdf*) **N/A federal property**
24. ☒ Demonstrations of Support (ENF: *DOS.pdf*)
25. ☐ Real Estate Appraisal (Acquisition projects) (ENF: *Appraisal.pdf*) **N/A**

# INVASIVE WEED MANAGEMENT IN THE MERCED RIVER CORRIDOR

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**SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY  
PROPOSITION 84 GRANT APPLICATION FORM  
CATEGORY ONE GRANTS**


Rev. January 2010

*Complete all applicable items on both pages of form.*

<b>1. PROJECT NAME</b> <b>INVASIVE WEED MANAGEMENT IN THE MERCED RIVER CORRIDOR</b>	<b>2. REFERENCE NUMBER</b>									
<b>3. APPLICANT</b> <i>(Agency name, address, and zip code)</i>  UPPER MERCED RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL P O Box 5008-201 Mariposa, CA 95338	<b>4. APPLICANT TYPE:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Organization									
<b>5. APPLICANT'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE</b> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Name and title – type or print</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Phone</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Email Address</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mr.         </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Donna Brownell, Director         </td> <td style="text-align: center;">209-966 3155</td> <td style="text-align: center;">info@arts-mariposa.org</td> </tr> </table>		<i>Name and title – type or print</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email Address</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Donna Brownell, Director	209-966 3155	info@arts-mariposa.org
<i>Name and title – type or print</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email Address</i>								
<input type="checkbox"/> Mr.										
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Donna Brownell, Director	209-966 3155	info@arts-mariposa.org								
<b>6. PERSON WITH DAY-TO-DAY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE GRANT</b> <i>(If different from Authorized Representative)</i> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Name and title – type or print</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Phone</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Email Address</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mr.         </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Liana Lopez, Project Supervisor         </td> <td style="text-align: center;">209-966-2221</td> <td style="text-align: center;">watershed@sti.net</td> </tr> </table>		<i>Name and title – type or print</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email Address</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Liana Lopez, Project Supervisor	209-966-2221	watershed@sti.net
<i>Name and title – type or print</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email Address</i>								
<input type="checkbox"/> Mr.										
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Liana Lopez, Project Supervisor	209-966-2221	watershed@sti.net								
<b>7. PERSON WITH FISCAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR GRANT CONTRACT/INVOICING</b> <i>(If different from Authorized Representative or Day to Day Administrator)</i> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Name and title – type or print</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Phone</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Email Address</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mr.         </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ms.         </td> </tr> </table>		<i>Name and title – type or print</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email Address</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr.			<input type="checkbox"/> Ms.		
<i>Name and title – type or print</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email Address</i>								
<input type="checkbox"/> Mr.										
<input type="checkbox"/> Ms.										
<b>8. FUNDING INFORMATION</b>  <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40%;">SNC Grant Request</td> <td style="width: 60%; text-align: right;">\$ 192,269.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>(Must be \$5,000 - \$1,000,000)</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Funds</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Project Cost</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 192,269.60</td> </tr> </table>		SNC Grant Request	\$ 192,269.60	<i>(Must be \$5,000 - \$1,000,000)</i>		Other Funds	\$	Total Project Cost	\$ 192,269.60	
SNC Grant Request	\$ 192,269.60									
<i>(Must be \$5,000 - \$1,000,000)</i>										
Other Funds	\$									
Total Project Cost	\$ 192,269.60									
<b>9. PROJECT CATEGORIES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Site Improvement (fill in all that apply)</b> Project Area: _____ Total Acres: _____ SNC Portion (if different): _____ Total Miles (i.e. river or stream bank): <u>12</u> SNC Portion (if different): _____	<b>9a. DELIVERABLES</b> <b>(Select one primary deliverable)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restoration <input type="checkbox"/> Enhancement <input type="checkbox"/> Resource Protection <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Development / Improvement									
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Acquisition (fill in all that apply)</b> Project Area: _____ Total Acres: _____ SNC Portion (if different): _____	<b>(Select one primary deliverable)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Fee Title <input type="checkbox"/> Easement or Other Landowner Agreement									

Total Miles (i.e. river or stream bank): _____ SNC Portion (if different): _____	
<b>10. PROJECT ADDRESS/LOCATION</b> (Include zip code) Briceburg Rd, Briceburg to North Fork of Merced River 95345 Incline Road, Downstream from Foresta Bridge, 95318	
<b>11. LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE</b> <b>BRICEBURG:</b> LATITUDE 37 36'28.37" NORTH LONGITUDE 120 0'0.30" WEST <b>INCLINE ROAD:</b> LATITUDE 37 40'20.00" NORTH LONGITUDE 119 49' 45.28 WEST	
<b>12. COUNTY</b> Mariposa	<b>13. CITY</b> (Is project within city limits? If so, which one?)
<b>14. NEAREST PUBLIC WATER AGENCY (OR AGENCIES) CONTACT INFORMATION:</b>	
Name: Mark Rowney Email address: mpud@sti.net	Phone Number: 209 966 2515
Name: Email address:	Phone Number:
<b>15. CEQA OR NEPA DOCUMENT TYPE</b> (if applicable)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of Exemption <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Declaration <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Finding of No Significant Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Joint CEQA/NEPA Document
<b>16. STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER</b> N/A	
<b>17. APPRAISAL</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Submittal with application <input type="checkbox"/> Submittal by _____	

I certify that the information contained in the Application, including required attachments, is accurate.

  
Signed (Authorized Representative)

Donna Brownell, Director

Name and Title (print or type)

9-13-10  
Date



## RESOLUTION

### Board of Directors Resolution No. 1-2010

In the matter of: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR THE SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY GRANT PROGRAM UNDER THE SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND ACT OF 2006	Resolution No: 1-2010 Date: August 26, 2010
--	--

The following RESOLUTION was duly passed by the Board of Directors of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council at a regular meeting held August 26, 2010 by the following vote:

Ayes: 5  
Noes: 0  
Abstentions: 0  
Absent: 2

Signed and approved by:



Director

WHEREAS, the Legislature and Governor of the State of California have provided Funds for the program shown above; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of a portion of these funds through a local assistance grants program, establishing necessary procedures; and

WHEREAS, said procedures established by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy require a resolution certifying the approval of application(s) by the Applicant's governing board before submission of said application(s) to the SNC; and

WHEREAS, the Applicant, if selected, will enter into an agreement with the SNC to carry out the project; and

WHEREAS, the Upper Merced River Watershed Council has identified the Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor project as valuable toward meeting its mission and goals.



BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council that this Board:

1. Approves the submittal of an application for the Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor Project; and
2. Certifies that Applicant understands the assurances and certification requirements in the application; and
3. Certifies that Applicant or title holder will have sufficient funds to operate and maintain the resource(s) consistent with the long-term benefits described in support of the application; or will secure the resources to do so; and
4. Certifies that Applicant will comply with all legal requirements as determined during the application process; and
5. Appoints Liana Lopez, or designee, as agent to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including but not limited to: applications, agreements, payment requests, and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Upper Merced River Watershed Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2010.**

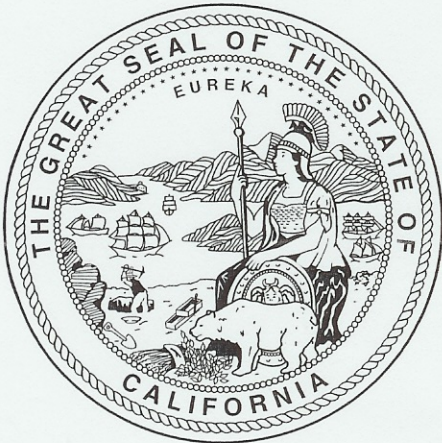


**State of California**  
**Secretary of State**



I, DEBRA BOWEN, Secretary of State of the State of California, hereby certify:

That the attached transcript of 3 page(s) has been compared with the record on file in this office, of which it purports to be a copy, and that it is full, true and correct.



**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I execute this certificate and affix the Great Seal of the State of California this day of

FEB 20 2008

*Debra Bowen*

DEBRA BOWEN  
Secretary of State



**ENDORSED - FILED**  
In the office of the Secretary of State  
of the State of California

FEB 20 2008

**ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION  
OF THE  
UPPER MERCED RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL  
A CALIFORNIA PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION**

**ONE:** The name of this corporation is the Upper Merced River Watershed Council.

**TWO:** This corporation is a nonprofit public benefit corporation and is not organized for the private gain of any person. It is organized under the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law for charitable purposes. The specific purposes for which this corporation is organized are to promote stewardship of the Upper Merced River Watershed by providing educational and volunteer opportunities through public outreach and community-based projects.

**THREE:** The name and address in the State of California of this corporation's initial agent for service of process is Sue Overstreet, 5009 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Mariposa, CA 95338.

**FOUR:** (a) This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (1) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or (2) by a corporation contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code.

(c) No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign (including the publishing or distribution of statements) on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.



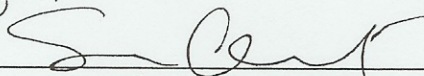
**FIVE:** The names and addresses of the persons appointed to act as the initial directors of this corporation are:

Name	Address
Sue Overstreet	4852 Bear Valley Rd. Mariposa, CA 952338
Leonard McKenzie	4540 Ashworth Rd. Mariposa, CA 95338
Gwen Nitta	3130 E. Westfall Mariposa, CA 95338

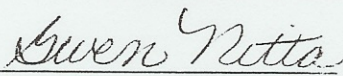
**SIX:** The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to educational purposes meeting the requirements of Section 214 of the California Revenue and Taxation Code and no part of the net income or assets of the organization shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer, or member thereof or to the benefit of any private person.

On the dissolution or winding up of the corporation, its assets remaining after payment of, or provision for payment of, all debts and liabilities of this corporation, shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for educational purposes meeting the requirements of Section 214 of the California Revenue and Taxation Code and which has established its tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Date: February 14, 2008

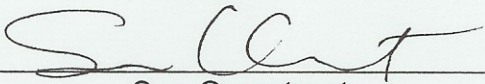
, Director  
Sue Overstreet

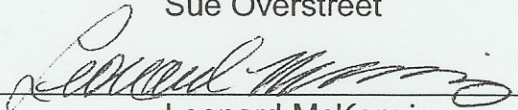
, Director  
Leonard McKenzie

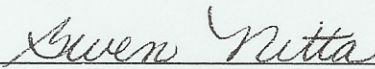
, Director  
Gwen Nitta



We, the above-mentioned initial directors of this corporation, hereby declare that we are the persons who executed the foregoing Articles of Incorporation, which instrument is our act and deed.

, Director  
Sue Overstreet

, Director  
Leonard McKenzie

, Director  
Gwen Nitta





**BYLAWS  
OF  
UPPER MERCED RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL  
A CALIFORNIA PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION**

**ARTICLE 1  
OFFICES**

**SECTION 1. PRINCIPAL OFFICE**

The principal office of the corporation for the transaction of its business is located in Mariposa County, California.

**SECTION 2. OTHER OFFICES**

The corporation may also have offices at such other places where it is qualified to do business, as its business may require and as the board of directors may, from time to time, designate.

**ARTICLE 2  
PURPOSES**

**SECTION 1. OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES**

The primary objectives and purposes of this corporation shall be to coordinate activities and projects designed by stakeholders for the Upper Merced River Watershed. It will provide educational and volunteer opportunities for local residents and visitors so that they can learn about the ecology and history of the Watershed and become good stewards of its resources.

The mission of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council is to protect and enhance the natural, economic, and cultural resources of the Upper Merced River Watershed. We will work cooperatively with all individuals and organizations to keep the Watershed healthy through education, community-based projects, responsible planning, and stewardship.

## **ARTICLE 3 DIRECTORS**

### **SECTION 1. NUMBER**

The corporation shall have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 11 directors and collectively they shall be known as the board of directors. The number may be changed by amendment of this bylaw, or by repeal of this bylaw and adoption of a new bylaw, as provided in these bylaws.

### **SECTION 2. POWERS**

Subject to the provisions of the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation law and any limitations in the articles of incorporation and bylaws relating to action required or permitted to be taken or approved by the members, if any, of this corporation, the activities and affairs of this corporation shall be conducted and all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction of the board of directors.

### **SECTION 3. DUTIES**

Directors shall have the power to:

- (a) Perform any and all duties imposed on them collectively or individually by law, by the articles of incorporation of this corporation, or by these bylaws;
- (b) Appoint and remove, employ and discharge, and, except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, prescribe the duties and fix the compensation, if any, of all officers, staff, and employees of the corporation;
- (c) Supervise all officers, agents, and employees of the corporation to assure that their duties are performed properly;
- (d) Meet at such times and places as required by these bylaws;
- (e) Register their addresses with the secretary of the corporation and notices of meetings mailed or telegraphed to them at such addresses shall be valid notices thereof.

### **SECTION 4. TERMS OF OFFICE**

Each director shall hold office for three years. Individuals will be limited to serving two consecutive terms. After a one year hiatus, individuals may again be elected to serve on the Board of Directors. Names of new board members will be put forward by the Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors and elected by majority vote of the board at its annual meeting.

## **SECTION 5. COMPENSATION**

Directors shall serve without compensation. They shall be allowed reasonable advancement or reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of their regular duties as specified in Section 3 of this Article. Directors may not be compensated for rendering services to the corporation in any capacity other than director unless such other compensation is reasonable and is allowable under the provisions of Section 6 of this Article. Any payments to directors shall be approved in advance in accordance with this corporation's conflict of interest policy.

## **SECTION 6. RESTRICTION REGARDING INTERESTED DIRECTORS**

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, not more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the persons serving on the board may be interested persons. For purposes of this Section, "interested persons" means either:

- (a) Any person currently being compensated by the corporation for services rendered it within the previous twelve (12) months, whether as a full- or part-time officer or other employee, independent contractor, or otherwise, excluding any reasonable compensation paid to a director as director; or
- (b) Any brother, sister, ancestor, descendant, spouse, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, or father-in-law of any such person.

## **SECTION 7. PLACE OF MEETINGS**

Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at any place designated by the Board of Directors. In the absence of any such designation, meetings shall be held at the principal executive office.

## **SECTION 8. REGULAR AND ANNUAL MEETINGS**

Regular meetings of directors shall occur four times a year, including the annual board meeting

## **SECTION 9. SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Special meetings of the board of directors may be called by the chairperson of the board the vice chair, the secretary, or by any two directors, and such meetings shall be held at the place, within or without the State of California, designated by the person or persons calling the meeting, and in the absence of such designation, at the principal office of the corporation.

## **SECTION 10. NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

Regular meetings of the board may be held without notice. Special meetings of the board shall be held upon four (4) days' notice by first-class mail or forty-eight (48) hours' notice delivered personally or by telephone or electronic communication.. If sent by mail or email, the notice shall be deemed to be delivered on its deposit in the mails or on its confirmed delivery to the recipient's email inbox. Such notices shall be addressed to each director at his or her address as shown on the books of the corporation. Notice shall be given of any special meeting to directors absent from the original meeting if the special meeting is held more than twenty-four (24) hours from the time of the original meeting.

## **SECTION 11. CONTENTS OF NOTICE**

Notice of meetings not herein dispensed with shall specify the place, day, and hour of the meeting. The purpose of any board meeting need not be specified in the notice.

## **SECTION 12. WAIVER OF NOTICE AND CONSENT TO HOLDING MEETINGS**

The transactions of any meeting of the board, however called and noticed or wherever held, are as valid as though the meeting had been duly held after proper call and notice, provided a quorum, as hereinafter defined, is present and provided that either before or after the meeting each director not present signs a waiver of notice, a consent to holding the meeting, or an approval of the minutes thereof. All such waivers, consents, or approvals shall be filed with the corporate records or made a part of the minutes of the meeting.

## **SECTION 13. QUORUM FOR MEETINGS**

A quorum shall consist of a majority of directors currently in office.

Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws or in the articles of incorporation of this corporation, or by law, no business shall be considered by the board at any meeting at which a quorum, as hereinafter defined, is not present, and the only motion which the chair shall entertain at such meeting is a motion to adjourn. However, a majority of the directors present at such meeting may adjourn from time to time until the time fixed for the next regular meeting of the board.

When a meeting is adjourned for lack of a quorum, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of the time and place of the adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at such meeting, other than by announcement at the meeting at which the adjournment is taken, except as provided in Section 10 of this Article.

The directors present at a duly called and held meeting at which a quorum is initially present may continue to do business notwithstanding the loss of a quorum at the meeting due to a withdrawal of directors from the meeting, provided that any action

thereafter taken must be approved by at least a majority of the required quorum for such meeting or such greater percentage as may be required by law, or the articles of incorporation or bylaws of this corporation.

#### **SECTION 14. MAJORITY ACTION AS BOARD ACTION**

Every act or decision done or made by a majority of the directors present at a meeting duly held at which a quorum is present is the act of the board of directors, unless the articles of incorporation or bylaws of this corporation, or provisions of the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law, particularly those provisions relating to appointment of committees (Section 5212), approval of contracts or transactions in which a director has a material financial interest (Section 5233), and indemnification of directors (Section 5238e), require a greater percentage or different voting rules for approval of a matter by the board.

#### **SECTION 15. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS**

Meetings of the board of directors shall be presided over by the chairperson of the board, or, if no such person has been so designated or, in his or her absence, the president of the corporation or, in his or her absence, by the vice president of the corporation or, in the absence of each of these persons, by a chairperson chosen by a majority of the directors present at the meeting. The secretary of the corporation shall act as secretary of all meetings of the board, provided that, in his or her absence, the presiding officer shall appoint another person to act as secretary of the meeting.

Meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, as such rules may be revised from time to time, insofar as such rules are not inconsistent with or in conflict with these bylaws, with the articles of incorporation of this corporation, or with provisions of law.

#### **SECTION 16. ACTION BY UNANIMOUS WRITTEN CONSENT WITHOUT MEETING**

Any action required or permitted to be taken by the board of directors under any provision of law may be taken without a meeting, if all members of the board shall individually or collectively consent in writing to such action. For the purposes of this Section only, "all members of the board" shall not include any "interested director" as defined in Section 5233 of the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the board. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as the unanimous vote of the directors. Any certificate or other document filed under any provision of law which relates to action so taken shall state that the action was taken by unanimous written consent of the board of directors without a meeting and that the bylaws of this corporation authorize the directors to so act, and such statement shall be prima facie evidence of such authority.

## **SECTION 17. VACANCIES**

Vacancies on the board of directors shall exist (1) on the death, resignation, or removal of any director, and (2) whenever the number of authorized directors is increased.

The board of directors may declare vacant the office of a director who has been declared of unsound mind by a final order of court, or convicted of a felony, or been found by a final order or judgment of any court to have breached any duty under Section 5230 and following of the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law.

Directors may be removed without cause by a majority of the directors then in office.

Any director may resign effective upon giving written notice to the chairperson of the board, the president, the secretary, or the board of directors, unless the notice specifies a later time for the effectiveness of such resignation. No director may resign if the corporation would then be left without a duly elected director or directors in charge of its affairs, except upon notice to the attorney general.

Vacancies on the board may be filled by approval of the board or, if the number of directors then in office is less than a quorum, by (1) the unanimous written consent of the directors then in office, (2) the affirmative vote of a majority of the directors then in office at a meeting held pursuant to notice or waivers of notice complying with this Article of these bylaws, or (3) a sole remaining director.

A person elected to fill a vacancy as provided by this Section shall hold office until the next annual election of the board of directors or until his or her death, resignation, or removal from office.

## **SECTION 18. NONLIABILITY OF DIRECTORS**

The directors shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or other obligations of the corporation.

## **SECTION 19. INDEMNIFICATION BY CORPORATION OF DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AND OTHER AGENTS**

To the extent that a person who is, or was, a director, officer, employee, or other agent of this corporation has been successful on the merits in defense of any civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative proceeding brought to procure a judgment against such person by reason of the fact that he or she is, or was, an agent of the corporation, or has been successful in defense of any claim, issue, or matter, therein, such person shall be indemnified against expenses actually and reasonably incurred by the person in connection with such proceeding.

If such person either settles any such claim or sustains a judgment against him or her, then indemnification against expenses, judgments, fines, settlements, and other

amounts reasonably incurred in connection with such proceedings shall be provided by this corporation but only to the extent allowed by, and in accordance with the requirements of, Section 5238 of the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law.

## **SECTION 20. INSURANCE FOR CORPORATE AGENTS**

The board of directors may adopt a resolution authorizing the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of any agent of the corporation (including a director, officer, employee, or other agent of the corporation) against any liability other than for violating provisions of law relating to self-dealing (Section 5233 of the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law) asserted against or incurred by the agent in such capacity or arising out of the agent's status as such, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify the agent against such liability under the provisions of Section 5238 of the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law.

## **ARTICLE 4 OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1. NUMBER OF OFFICERS**

The officers of the corporation shall be the board chair, the vice chair, the secretary, and the treasurer.

### **SECTION 2. QUALIFICATION, ELECTION, AND TERM OF OFFICE**

Any board member may serve as an officer of this corporation. Officers shall be elected by the board of directors, at any time, and each officer shall hold office until he or she resigns, is removed, or is otherwise disqualified to serve, or until his or her successor shall be elected and qualified, whichever occurs first.

Officers of this corporation shall be elected every year at the Annual Meeting to serve a one-year term. Individuals will be limited to two consecutive terms but may serve again after a period of one year.

### **SECTION 3. REMOVAL AND RESIGNATION**

Any officer may be removed, either with or without cause, by the board of directors, at any time. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the board of directors. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of receipt of such notice or at any later date specified therein, and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

#### **SECTION 4. VACANCIES**

Any vacancy caused by the death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, of any officer shall be filled by the board of directors. In the event of a vacancy, such vacancy may be filled temporarily by appointment by the chair until such time as the board shall fill the vacancy.

#### **SECTION 5. DUTIES OF CHAIR**

The chair shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation and shall, subject to the control of the board of directors, supervise and control the affairs of the corporation and the activities of the officers. He or she shall perform all duties incident to his or her office and such other duties as may be required by law, by the articles of incorporation of this corporation, or by these bylaws, or which may be prescribed from time to time by the board of directors. He or she shall preside at all meetings of the board of directors.

#### **SECTION 6. DUTIES OF VICE CHAIR**

In the absence of the chair, or in the event of his or her inability or refusal to act, the vice chair shall perform all the duties of the chair, and when so acting shall have all the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions on, the chair. The vice chair shall have other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by law, by the articles of incorporation, or by these bylaws, or as may be prescribed by the board of directors.

#### **SECTION 7. DUTIES OF SECRETARY**

The secretary shall:

Certify and keep at the principal office of the corporation the original, or a copy of these bylaws as amended or otherwise altered to date.

Keep at the principal office of the corporation or at such other place as the board may determine, a book of minutes of all meetings of the directors, and, if applicable, meetings of committees of directors and of members, recording therein the time and place of holding, whether regular or special, how called, how notice thereof was given, the names of those present or represented at the meeting, and the proceedings thereof.

See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws or as required by law.

Be custodian of the records and of the seal of the corporation and see that the seal is affixed to all duly executed documents, the execution of which on behalf of the corporation under its seal is authorized by law or these bylaws.



Exhibit at all reasonable times to any director of the corporation, or to his or her agent or attorney, on request therefor, the bylaws and the minutes of the proceedings of the directors of the corporation.

In general, perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as may be required by law, by the articles of incorporation of this corporation, or by these bylaws, or which may be assigned to him or her from time to time by the board of directors.

## **SECTION 8. DUTIES OF TREASURER**

The Treasurer shall oversee the handling of all funds and securities of the Corporation. The Treasurer shall oversee the disbursement of all moneys as the Board of Directors shall direct and the maintenance of adequate and correct accounts of the corporation's properties and business transactions. He/she shall render reports and accountings as required and shall discharge such other duties as pertain to the office or as prescribed by these bylaws or by the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE 5 COMMITTEES**

### **SECTION 1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD**

The Executive Committee is made up of the officers of the board. The board may authorize this committee to act on behalf of the board in special circumstances with its actions approved by the full board of directors at the next regular meeting.

By a majority vote of its members then in office, the board may at any time revoke or modify any or all of the authority so delegated, increase or decrease but not below two (2) the number of its members, and fill vacancies therein from the members of the board. The committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings, cause them to be filed with the corporate records, and report the same to the board from time to time as the board may require.

### **SECTION 2. NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The chair will appoint a Nominating Committee to identify candidates for election to the board. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates for the board at the annual board meeting.

### **SECTION 3. OTHER COMMITTEES**

The corporation shall have such other committees as may from time to time be designated by resolution of the board of directors. Such other committees may consist of persons who are not also members of the board. These additional committees shall

act in an advisory capacity only to the board and shall be clearly titled as "advisory" committees.

#### **SECTION 4. MEETINGS AND ACTION OF COMMITTEES**

Meetings and action of committees shall be governed by, noticed, held, and taken in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws concerning meetings of the board of directors, with such changes in the context of such bylaw provisions as are necessary to substitute the committee and its members for the board of directors and its members, except that the time for regular meetings of committees may be fixed by resolution of the board of directors or by the committee. The time for special meetings of committees may also be fixed by the board of directors. The board of directors may also adopt rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of meetings of committees to the extent that such rules and regulations are not inconsistent with the provisions of these bylaws.

### **ARTICLE 6**

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

This corporation shall have no voting members. Any action which would otherwise under law require the approval of the Board of Directors, and all rights which would otherwise vest in the members under law shall vest in the Directors of this corporation. The Board of Directors may, by resolution, establish such categories of nonvoting memberships as it deems advisable and useful in its research, management, and fund raising activities.

### **ARTICLE 7**

#### **EXECUTION OF INSTRUMENTS, DEPOSITS, AND FUNDS**

##### **SECTION 1. EXECUTION OF INSTRUMENTS**

The board of directors, except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, may by resolution authorize any officer or agent of the corporation to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the corporation by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable monetarily for any purpose or in any amount.

##### **SECTION 3. DEPOSITS**

All funds of the corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the board of directors may select.

## **SECTION 4. GIFTS**

The board of directors may accept on behalf of the corporation any contribution, gift, or bequest for the charitable or public purposes of this corporation.

## **ARTICLE 8 CORPORATE RECORDS, REPORTS, AND SEAL**

### **SECTION 1. MAINTENANCE OF CORPORATE RECORDS**

The corporation shall keep at its principal office in the State of California:

- (a) Minutes of all meetings of directors and committees of the board indicating the time and place of holding such meetings, whether regular or special, how called, the notice given, and the names of those present and the proceedings thereof;
- (b) Adequate and correct books and records of account, including accounts of its properties and business transactions and accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains, and losses;
- (c) A copy of the corporation's articles of incorporation and bylaws as amended to date.

### **SECTION 2. CORPORATE SEAL**

The board of directors may adopt, use, and at will alter, a corporate seal. Such seal shall be kept at the principal office of the corporation. Failure to affix the seal to corporate instruments, however, shall not affect the validity of any such instrument.

### **SECTION 3. DIRECTORS' INSPECTION RIGHTS**

Every director shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect and copy all books, records, and documents of every kind and to inspect the physical properties of the corporation.

### **SECTION 4. RIGHT TO COPY AND MAKE EXTRACTS**

Any inspection under the provisions of this Article may be made in person or by agent or attorney and the right to inspection includes the right to copy and make extracts.

### **SECTION 5. ANNUAL REPORT**

The board shall cause an annual report to be furnished not later than one hundred and twenty (120) days after the close of the corporation's fiscal year to all directors of the corporation, which report shall contain the following information in appropriate detail:

- (a) The assets and liabilities, including the trust funds, of the corporation as of the end of the fiscal year;
- (b) The principal changes in assets and liabilities, including trust funds, during the fiscal year;
- (c) The revenue or receipts of the corporation, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for the fiscal year;
- (d) The expenses or disbursements of the corporation, for both general and restricted purposes, during the fiscal year;
- (e) Any information required by Section 7 of this Article.

The annual report shall be accompanied by any report thereon of independent accountants, or, if there is no such report, the certificate of the treasurer that such statements were prepared without audit from the books and records of the corporation.

## **ARTICLE 9 FISCAL YEAR**

### **SECTION 1. FISCAL YEAR OF THE CORPORATION**

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin on the first day of July and end on the thirtieth day of June in each year.

## **ARTICLE 10 AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

### **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT**

Subject to any provision of law applicable to the amendment of bylaws of public benefit nonprofit corporations, these bylaws, or any of them, may be altered, amended, or repealed and new bylaws adopted subject to approval of a vote of two-thirds of the sitting directors, to be taken after the second reading of the proposed amendment. A revised copy containing the revisions will be prepared to be dated and signed by the board chair and secretary.

## **ARTICLE 11 AMENDMENT OF ARTICLES**

This corporation shall not amend its articles of incorporation to alter any statement which appears in the original articles of incorporation of the names and addresses of the

first directors of this corporation, nor the name and address of its initial agent, except to correct an error in such statement or to delete such statement after the corporation has filed a "Statement by a Domestic Nonprofit Corporation" pursuant to Section 6210 of the California Nonprofit Corporation Law.

## **ARTICLE 12**

### **PROHIBITION AGAINST SHARING CORPORATE PROFITS AND ASSETS**

#### **SECTION 1. PROHIBITION AGAINST SHARING CORPORATE PROFITS AND ASSETS**

No director, employee, or other person connected with this corporation, or any private individual, shall receive at any time any of the net earnings or pecuniary profit from the operations of the corporation, provided, however, that this provision shall not prevent payment to any such person of reasonable compensation for services performed for the corporation in effecting any of its public or charitable purposes, provided that such compensation is otherwise permitted by these bylaws and is fixed by resolution of the board of directors; and no such person or persons shall be entitled to share in the distribution of, and shall not receive, any of the corporate assets on dissolution of the corporation.

Adopted July 24, 2006

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
P. O. BOX 2508  
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: AUG 29 2008

UPPER MERCED RIVER WATERSHED  
COUNCIL  
PO BOX 5008-201  
MARIPOSA, CA 95338

Employer Identification Number:  
26-2083214  
DLN:  
17053176304038  
Contact Person:  
KIM NGUYEN ID# 31525  
Contact Telephone Number:  
(877) 829-5500  
Accounting Period Ending:  
December 31  
Public Charity Status:  
509(a)(2)  
Form 990 Required:  
Yes  
Effective Date of Exemption:  
February 20, 2008  
Contribution Deductibility:  
Yes  
Advance Ruling Ending Date:  
December 31, 2012  
Addendum Applies:  
No

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. During your advance ruling period, you will be treated as a public charity. Your advance ruling period begins with the effective date of your exemption and ends with advance ruling ending date shown in the heading of the letter.

Shortly before the end of your advance ruling period, we will send you Form 8734, Support Schedule for Advance Ruling Period. You will have 90 days after the end of your advance ruling period to return the completed form. We will then notify you, in writing, about your public charity status.

Please see enclosed Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization.

Letter 1045 (DO/CG)



## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

**County:** Mariposa

**Applicant:** Upper Merced River Watershed Council

**Project Title:** Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor

### **PROJECT GOAL**

The purpose of this project is to remove yellow starthistle and Italian thistle from riparian habitat along the Upper Merced River, approximately 80 acres of sensitive riparian habitat and to stop the spread of these invasives. The project supports the SNC program goal of protecting, conserving, and restoring the region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources and the Proposition 84 goal of restoring rivers, their watersheds and associated lands by controlling invasives, preventing their spread, and encouraging the native biodiversity to prevail.

### **PROJECT SCOPE**

The Upper Merced River Watershed is a highly diverse area that attracts four million visitors each year and supplies 70% of the San Joaquin's agricultural water. Yellow starthistle (YST) and Italian thistle have formed monocultures along the Merced River from Briceburg downriver, up the North Fork of the Merced River, as well as extensively in the El Portal area. Invasive weeds pose one of the greatest ecological threats to California lands and waterways. These monocultures crowd out native vegetation and reduce biodiversity while consuming large amounts of water. They also discourage recreation and public enjoyment.

The desired outcome is that, using crews, 75% of YST and Italian thistle will be cleared from approximately 80 acres in targeted areas by manual techniques during three years of intense, integrated weed management along the Merced River. The work to be funded under this grant is part of a large ongoing invasives project begun in 2003. For the past eight years, the Upper Merced River Watershed Council (UMRWC) has combined forces primarily with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on an enormously successful invasive removal project along seven miles of the Merced from Briceburg downriver. But effective active control of invasive weeds requires strategies that encompass geographic, not political boundaries!

Building on this long partnership with the BLM, the UMRWC will expand the partnerships with land-management agencies as well as the areas to be treated. Working with the US Forest Service (USFS) botanist from the Sierra National Forest, and the National Park Service (NPS) botanist from Yosemite National Park, the UMRWC will significantly enlarge its areas of active invasive management.

Major tasks will include continuing the work with the BLM along seven miles of the Briceburg Road and the Wild and Scenic Trail and expanding that work to include two new areas – a two acre stretch along the North Fork and a one acre area near the confluence of the North Fork and the main stem. The project will also include coordinating with the NPS and USFS to target infested areas in a 10 mile stretch along Incline Road downstream from El Portal. Crews will manually attack invasives in each of these areas, documenting the effectiveness of treatment through mapping.

Additional funding to accomplish this work will be supplied in the form of in-kind goods and services from BLM - \$13,400; USFS - \$5,250; Natural Resources Conservation Service - \$2,576; NPS - \$2,900.

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT

William Haigh, Bureau of Land Management; Niki Nicholas, National Park Service; Joanna M. Clines, US Forest Service; John Brady, Mariposans for the Environment and Responsible Government; Cathi Boze, Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner; Dawn Afman, Natural Resource Conservation Service; Jeannie Habben, Central Sierra Watershed Committee and Chowchilla Red Top RCD; Kris Randal, Yosemite Area Audubon

### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Treatment areas identified and implementation plan developed, adjusted as needed	March 2011 – 2013
Tools and equipment purchased	March 2011 – Aug 2013
Crews hired, trained, supervised through collaboration with agencies	Feb – Aug 2011, 2012, 2013
YST and Italian thistle pulled and/or mowed using contract crews	Feb – Aug 2011, 2012, 2013
Outreach accomplished (displays, local media, presentations) three articles published	Minimum of one each per year
Local invasive meetings/trainings attended	February 2011 – 2013 8 per yr
Photos, maps, transects (pre-and post-data) submitted	October 2011 – 2013
Progress Reports written and submitted	Sept 2011 and every 6 months thereafter
Final Report written and submitted	November 2013

### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project Management & Field Management Staff (includes Progress Reports and Final Report)	\$76,176.00
Mileage	\$1,794.00
Invasive Species Control Crews	\$75,000.00
Equipment/Tools	\$3,000.00
Workers' Comp	\$6,825.60
Printed Materials	\$200.00
Outreach/Education	\$600.00
Liability Insurance	\$3,600.00
Administration	\$25,074.00
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$192,269.60</b>



## **7. Evaluation Criteria**

### **A. Project Quality and Readiness**

#### **2. General Description**

The purpose of this approximately 32-month project is to fund three seasons of intense, integrated weed management in targeted areas along seven miles of the Merced River from Briceburg downstream, in a two acre area adjacent to the North Fork of the Merced, in a section west of the confluence of the North Fork and the main stem, and on targeted areas along a ten mile stretch of Incline Road west of El Portal along the main stem. This work will focus on removing invasive weed populations, primarily yellow starthistle (YST) and Italian thistle, in areas both previously treated and also in additional riparian areas. The invasive work will be accomplished by manual removal (hand pulling and mowing by crews) which is especially suitable for the gulches and hillsides next to the river. This project significantly expands the 2008 SNC funded project by duration, geographic and target areas, extent of coordination, and hours of contract work by hired crews.

While much of California is heavily infested with YST and other invasives, the Merced River Canyon generally is not – except for two badly infected areas: one on the hillsides around and downstream from the National Park Service administrative area of El Portal and the second from Briceburg downstream. Most of the canyon miles in between are not only clear of this invasive but also host breathtaking wildflower displays in spring. Many visitors come to view the successive blooms on this scenic drive to Yosemite. In the cooperative effort to keep the invasives from spreading to the pristine area, the US Forest Service (USFS) and the National Park Service (NPS) have spent several seasons attacking YST on the hillsides of El Portal. The funding for the USFS work has been cut, and while the NPS has picked up some of the responsibility in El Portal, progress has been slow. The invasives growth and regrowth have outstripped management. At the other end of the river corridor, the Upper Merced River Watershed Council (UMRWC) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have targeted the five-mile Briceburg Road and subsequent two-miles down river on the Wild & Scenic Trail.

The goals of this project are to:

- remove YST and Italian thistle infestations along targeted areas of the Merced River corridor by crews using manual techniques
- continue to manage areas of regrowth in previously treated sections of the river corridor
- expand treatment to include a two acre infestation along the North Fork, and another one acre area a mile downstream from the confluence of the North Fork and the Merced.
- expand weed work to a hard-to-reach area between the river and the road along Incline Road in El Portal where herbicide cannot be used
- continue to survey and map any new or existing YST and Italian thistle infestations in the river corridor that have not been documented
- provide opportunities for people to learn about invasive weed management

Progress toward these goals will be documented in regular reports to the SNC that include:

- treatment plans
- pre-and post-data and narrative
- maps of new infestations
- photo documentation before and after treatment
- documented educational outreach

The following work will be completed:

- Treatment plans will be developed cooperatively and transects established to monitor effectiveness of treatment.
- If needed, additional specialized tools will be purchased using SNC funding (a GPS unit, weed eaters, picks, ropes, scythes, etc.) to facilitate effective management of invasives.
- Using SNC grant funding, crews will be hired, trained and supervised by the staff from UMRWC and participating agencies and will manually remove YST and Italian thistle from designated areas.
- New or undocumented infestations will be mapped using GPS and GIS.
- UMRWC staff will attend local invasive weed meetings to coordinate work, to share progress and outcomes of this project, and to stay current with invasives management practices.
- Public outreach will occur in the form of informational articles and informal sharing of the project at community gatherings when appropriate.

From 2003 to 2005 utilizing funds from a small Department of Conservation grant, the UMRWC and the BLM began the first YST removal demonstration project along the 2-mile Wild and Scenic section of trail (Mountain King Mine downstream to the confluence of the North Fork) by hand-pulling and mowing. Crews were supervised by staff from the BLM and the UMRWC. Regular monitoring occurred in established transects within the treated area and also in an untreated area designated as a Control. The resulting data showed a significant decrease in YST regrowth each year along the trail and a corresponding increase in growth in the Control area where no removal work was done.

Since that time, work on both Italian thistle and YST has occurred along an expanded 7 mile area in the river corridor downstream from Briceburg, but the work has fluctuated depending on funds and human resources. When crews and monies have been available, the work has been carried out under the supervision of the BLM rangers and the UMRWC staff. In addition, the UMRWC has organized Weed Warrior Days for volunteers to participate in removing the invasives. However, the amount of invasive removal possible with crews greatly exceeds what a day or two with volunteers can accomplish.

In spring 2010, SNC Prop 84 2008 funding made possible the hiring of a California Department of Corrections (CDC) crew for four weeks – two weeks for attacking Italian thistle and two for YST. For the first time, 90% of YST and Italian thistle were cleared from targeted hillsides of seven miles of river corridor! These same SNC grant funds will cover a second season of this work next year (2011) in the same area. It takes approximately three to five years of clearing invasives in an affected area to achieve manageable control. Once control of noxious weeds occurs, then only minimal effort is required to have lasting benefit.

This new grant will allow two additional years (2012 and 2013) of multi crew invasive work on this same section of river corridor. Plus, it will enable the expansion of crucial weed removal in the additional areas up the North Fork, below the confluence of the North Fork and the Merced River, and downriver from El Portal for three successive seasons (2011, 2012, 2013).

### 3. Work plan and Schedule

#### a.

- **Task 1: Work with partners to identify priorities among treatment areas and develop treatment plans for targeted areas of the Merced River Corridor (March 2011 –October 2013).** UMRWC staff will meet with partners BLM, NPS, USFS to plan for both the coming season and the subsequent years to plan weed work and the use of crews and equipment. After each season, there will be a joint assessment of the past season and modification for the next year.
- **Task 2: Map any new areas planned for treatment that year in order to document the extent of the existing population (March – June 2011, 2012, 2013)** By late March or early April,

Italian thistle should be easily visible for mapping the populations before any removal work is performed. YST is usually well established by June. Mapping will only be carried out to identify the extent of the area being treated. When appropriate, the mapping will be repeated several months after the removal work is performed on both Italian Thistle and YST to assess treatment effectiveness and monitor for any re-growth.

- **Task 3: Purchase tools and equipment necessary for invasive weed removal (March 2011 – August 2013).** Some additional tools and equipment may need to be purchased at the beginning of the 2011 weed season and throughout the life of the grant for occasional replacements and/or upgrades. Additionally, since the UMRWC's GPS unit is no longer functioning, it will need to be replaced with one that is compatible with the software of partner National Resource Conservation Services (NRCS).
- **Task 4: Evaluate existing transects and / or establish new transects (Italian thistle – April/May 2011 – 2013, YST – August 2011 – 2013).** Transects for Italian thistle will be established in April (depending on stage of plant development). YST transects will be established in June (depending on stage of plant development). These transects will be used as another tool to collect data and monitor the effectiveness of methods/timing used for invasive weed management. The transects will provide a count of the specified invasive present in 25 meter sections before and after work performed and can also be used for re-growth comparisons in subsequent seasons.
- **Task 5: Photo documentation of treatment areas before and post-work (April – September 2011 – 2013).** Photos will be taken of the targeted areas before and after invasive weed work to help document effectiveness of control efforts.
- **Task 6: Collaborate with BLM, USFS, and NPS to hire, train, and supervise crews for invasive weed removal (March – July 2011 – 2013).** Timing is imperative when working with invasives. The challenge with past weed work was having enough personnel at the optimum time (at 2%-5% bloom). The window of opportunity to work effectively with invasives is very small. If the weeds are mowed too early then regrowth will occur within the same season – usually with the flower heads blooming very close to the ground where they remain unseen or are difficult to remove. Removal techniques performed when the plants are in full bloom will only aid in the spread of seed. Often by the time a single crew completes work in one targeted area, the invasives in the remaining areas are in the later stages of development (in full bloom) and cannot be worked, thus, the necessity for hiring more crews. Because invasives out-compete natives for water, sunlight and nutrients, it is essential to continue removal work the following seasons in order to deplete the seed bank with repeated treatment.

Targeted Area	Year 1 Work	Year 2 Work	Year 3 Work
++Briceburg Rd & Wild & Scenic Trail (2 crews for 2 wks each)	Work funded by a previous grant	Italian – 1 crew, 2 wks YST – 1 crew, 2 wks	Italian – 1 crew, 2 wks YST – 1 crew, 2 wks
**North Fork & Confluence (1 crew for 2 wks)	Italian – 1 crew, 2 wks	Italian – 1 crew, 2 wks	Italian – 1 crew, 2 wks
**El Portal Incline Road Area (2 crews for 1 wk each)	YST – 1 crew, 1 wk in June 1 crew, 1 wk in Aug.	YST – 1 crew, 1 wk in June 1 crew, 1 wk in August	YST – 1 crew, 1 wk in June 1 crew, 1 wk in Aug

++Indicates areas of ongoing treatment.

\*\*Indicates new areas to be added under this grant.

- **Task 7: Provide public outreach / media by publishing educational articles in UMRWC newsletter, in local media, on website and by giving presentations (April 2011 – October**

**2013).** Publishing articles in the media and the UMRWC newsletter will be an important part of educating the public on invasive weeds and eradication efforts. In this age of technology, keeping the UMRWC website updated will be an excellent way of expanding our reach via the internet. Presentations on invasive and native plants at stakeholder meetings and community events will augment written articles.

- **Task 8: Participate in local invasive meetings/trainings to stay current with research and technique improvements (March 2011 – October 2013).** Each year there are local Weed Management Area (WMA) meetings. One group concentrates on this county: the quarterly Mariposa County Integrated Weed Management Committee where all weed work in the county is shared and reviewed. The other group, the Sierra – San Joaquin Noxious Weed Alliance oversees the work done in Mariposa, Madera, and Fresno Counties. Representation at these meetings is crucial because of the rapid spread of invasives throughout the area. Treating just one area doesn't solve the statewide problem. It is important for UMRWC staff to attend to share information on the Watershed Council's invasive weed program as well as keep abreast of the latest research in treatment techniques available.
- **Task 9: Write and submit 6-month Progress Reports (September 2011 – November 2013).** The UMRWC will write and submit Progress Reports every six months to SNC.
- **Task 10: Write and submit Final Report (November 2013).** The UMRWC will write and submit the Final Report to SNC indicating project completion.

**b.** There are a variety of factors that might affect the projects time line; however both the UMRWC and the agencies involved have experience with handling these kinds of things. Weather, the availability of crews and supervision, equipment breakdowns, are just several key factors. None of these should be able to seriously derail the work schedule. If one crew isn't available, frequently another can be found and hired. This is also true with supervision – if one person can't make it, another can substitute. And generally the weather by spring and summer is fairly dependably sunny and hot. With numerous seasons under our belts (including one where the crew quit on day 2!), there have been no previous problems with completing the work.

Due to the constraints of the grant writing process, the UMRWC has created a timeline based on number of crew workdays. An unusually prolific weed year might somewhat curtail the miles of river bank cleared but would not endanger completing the project.

#### 4. Budget

(a) This project has garnered extensive support from a variety of sources. The largest contributor is the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) who will provide coordination and supervision of contract labor and tools for the crews as well as technical expertise valued at \$13,400. The US Forest Service (USFS) will offer technical assistance from the Sierra National Forest Botanist valued at \$5,250. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will support the project with \$2,576 worth of GIS field mapping and technical expertise. Yosemite National Park will make available technical expertise and intermittent supervision of crews valued at \$2,900. The total value of these in-kind services is \$24,126. In addition, the agencies will supply equipment (weed eaters and hand tools) for the crews and computers and software for mapping, and donate campground space to house crews. Together these are valued at \$10,800.

(b) It is requested that SNC fund 100% of the tasks, deliverables, and UMRWC staff time for this project.

(c) Although not dependent on other sources for monetary funding, this project does rely heavily on partners BLM, USFS, and National Park Service (NPS) for tools as well as coordination and supervision of crews through in-kind services as mentioned in (a) above. UMRWC staff has participated in several meetings with these organizations and received commitments for their services.

(d) Except for the previously mentioned in-kind services, the project is entirely dependent on funding from SNC. UMRWC staff time, contract weed crews, and additional equipment will be paid from grant funds. Funding from SNC will be sufficient to complete this project.

(e) n/a

(f) This project builds on an ongoing effort to control invasive weeds in the Merced River Canyon. Together, BLM and UMRWC staffs have been able to significantly reduce the amount of YST below Briceburg during the last eight years by consistently eating away at infestations of YST along the Briceburg Road and the Wild and Scenic Trail. Through a grant from SNC in 2008, Italian thistle in these areas has been added as a target invasive. The UMRWC proposes to continue this work and expand it to include three new areas. The long and productive partnership the UMRWC has had with the BLM, USFS, and NPS, all experienced at managing invasive weeds, has equipped the staff to immediately begin work on the ground once the project is funded.

Using equipment already owned by the UMRWC (digital camera, projector and laptop, and some tools), eliminates the need to purchase these items. The sizeable investment of experienced personnel and tools by the BLM, USFS, and NPS will provide substantial savings of over \$32,000. The project will also be able to minimize costs by utilizing existing data and computer software from partner NRCS. CA Department of Corrections (CDC) crews will be used when possible to reduce costs. Because these crews are frequently not available during fire season, just when the weeds are at their peak, contracting with the more expensive American Conservation Experience (ACE) crews will be necessary. Although the costs of using the ACE crews appear at first glance to be considerably higher, these crews will be able to camp near or on site, allowing for more time spent on actual work and less time on travel to the sites. In addition, they require less staff supervision once they receive instruction about the work.

The potential economic benefit of this project is sizeable. Taxpayers incur significant direct costs for both regional and statewide control efforts by public agencies on public lands. Invasive plants increase wildfire potential, reduce water resources, accelerate erosion and flooding, threaten wildlife, degrade range and crop land, and diminish outdoor recreation opportunities. Humans and water have the potential to spread invasives to vast areas. Attacking the areas of YST and Italian thistle will significantly deplete the thistle seed bank. This act will reduce or remove the need for yearly weed crews, reduce the number of seeds being carried downstream to spread into valuable agricultural land, and allow the native vegetation to thrive, making the area more desirable for wildlife and outdoor recreation activities. According to the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC), invasive plants cost California at least \$82 million every year for control, monitoring, and outreach alone. It estimates that the actual impacts reach into the billions of dollars annually. Money invested in preventing this spread could result in an enormous savings long term.

## 5. Restrictions, technical documents, and agreements

- a) Agreements and commitments from project partners (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Forest Service, National Resource Conservation Services) and Memorandum of Understanding of the Sierra-San Joaquin Noxious Weed Alliance, A Weed Management Area for Mariposa, Madera and Fresno Counties, California, are attached.

- b) n/a Acquisition only
- c) n/a Acquisition only
- d) n/a No easement
- e) n/a Project is on federal property
- f) n/a Not under Williamson Act
- g) n/a All property belongs to the Bureau of Land Management or US Forest Service, who are partners in the project. No permits are required.

## **B. Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits**

1. Invasive plants have impacted waterways, trails, and scenic landscapes along the Merced Wild & Scenic corridor. YST taproots extend to 6 feet and use tremendous amounts of water. Recent studies indicate that YST significantly depletes soil moisture reserves and can potentially cause changes to the hydrologic cycle. These invasive noxious thistles crowd out natives and destroy habitat for wildlife, including endangered species. Because of its high water use during spring and summer when human water use is at its highest, YST threatens human economic interests as well as native plant ecosystems.

The State Water Resources Control Board has indicated that control of invasive weeds could significantly conserve water statewide. Invasive plants can increase the fire fuel load and contribute to catastrophic wildfire. The California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) contends that it is especially important to manage invasive plants in settings with particularly valuable natural resources. Both YST and Italian thistle make the Merced River riparian corridor less appealing and attractive to recreational users. This project will achieve the following land and water benefits by managing these invasive weeds in the target area:

### Direct benefits:

- ✓ Improve water quantity by removal of noxious weeds. Noxious weeds absorb and store more water than natives.
- ✓ Support biodiversity by managing YST and Italian thistle to allow the seed bank of native plants to dominate.
- ✓ Enhance and protect swimming, rafting, kayaking, camping, birding, hiking, sightseeing and other recreational uses by Mariposa County residents and visitors.
- ✓ Build coordination among major land-management agencies along the Merced River corridor (BLM, NPS, USFS).

### Indirect benefits:

- ✓ Provide education and outreach on preventing the spread of invasive weeds. The area within this project is subject to heavy recreational use. Educating people about ways to prevent the spread of invasive weeds will be a key component of the project in order to mitigate the potential impact of recreational users inadvertently bringing seeds into the affected area as well as dispersing seeds when they return home.

### Long-term benefits:

- ✓ Decrease costs by greatly reducing large infestations, thus eliminating the need for large crews and allowing treated areas to be managed by minimal personnel.
- ✓ Save taxpayers dollars by preventing the spread of invasives that would cost millions to eradicate in areas outside of the project.

### Prevent adverse impacts:

- ✓ Reduce the spread of invasive seeds downstream to valuable agricultural areas in the San Joaquin Valley by removal of the seed source.
- ✓ Reduce the spread of invasive seeds upstream into areas currently not infected with YST and IT by removal of the seed source

## Performance Measures

### A. 1. Number of people reached

- ✓ One article per year will appear in local media.
- ✓ Annual updates will occur in the UMRWC newsletter with 350 subscribers.
- ✓ Information will be continuously available on the UMRWC website.

### A. 2. Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada

\$34,926 has been leveraged for the Sierra Nevada.

### A. 3. Number and type of jobs created

1.6 full time equivalent jobs created: temporary workers are hired to remove invasives, for a total of 8,000 hours; project management and field management staff, bookkeeping and clerical staff total 1,992 hours.

### A. 4. Number of new, improved or preserved economic activities

At least ten activities that contribute to the local economy (hiking, swimming, camping, kayaking, rafting, picnicking, sightseeing, birding, fishing, wildflower watching) will be preserved and improved. Outdoor enthusiasts generally avoid using resources that are difficult to assess and instead spend their time (and money) in areas that are more pleasing than those infested with thorny invasives. Therefore removing the weeds enhances the area for recreational use. However, no actual statistics for the area are available.

### B. 6. Linear feet of stream bank protected or restored

12 miles of the Merced River stream bank restored by removing invasive plants

### B. 8. Number of special significance sites protected or preserved

Three sites of special significance are within the project area:

1. Merced Wild and Scenic River
2. Merced River Wilderness Study Area
3. Merced River Special Recreation Management Area

### D. 13. Acres of land improved or restored

A minimum of 80 acres of extremely sensitive riparian habitat will be improved.

## 2. Sustainability

This project improves the watershed and land surrounding the project area by removal of YST and Italian thistle seed sources. This project occurs on the extreme eastern edge of YST infestation in California. Stopping the spread of these noxious invasives at this point is critical for wildlife habitat and the survival of native landscapes.

Building interagency cooperation among the major land management agencies increases efficacy of land management strategies by all agencies.

## 3. Impact on Climate Change

Invasive plant management impacts the hydrologic cycle which, in turn, impacts humans and ecological systems now and in the future. This invasive removal project contributes to California's ability to prepare for and respond to a changing climate by reducing stresses on limited water resources at peak times of human water use.

According to the Public Policy Institute of California, Preparing California for a Changing Climate, by mid century the amount of water stored as snow on April 1 each year is projected to decrease by 12 to 42 percent at all elevations.

That same agency estimates that more than 30 percent of California's native plants and 15 percent of its native vertebrate wildlife are at risk of extinction. Climate change will exacerbate the stresses already placed on native plants and animals. Habitat conservation planning must take into account

these climate shifts and create situations most beneficial for species conservation and human water use. By removing water-hogging invasive plants and allowing the native seedbed to repopulate the area, this project ameliorates the loss of water.

Habitat conservation is often piecemeal. Building collaboration, cooperation and communication among the major land management agencies along the Merced River helps to promote a contiguous conservation plan. This will benefit plants and animals during the climate change crisis and preemptively restore habitat that is more essential than ever. It will further foster contacts, communication and cooperation between agencies. This will help marshal scarce resources for a concerted management effort.

### **C. SNC Program Goals**

This project clearly protects, conserves and restores the region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources. By controlling YST and Italian thistle and preventing their spread, native biodiversity in both flora and fauna will prevail. In addition, invasive removal encourages visitor access to an area of rich human legacy that includes Native Americans, early pioneers, and the seekers of California's gold. The targeted areas of weed management are connected by the railroad route that brought early visitors through the river canyon to catch the stage from El Portal to Yosemite Valley. Today on that abandoned historic railroad bed, the Wild & Scenic Trail, Briceburg Road, and Incline Road facilitate foot, bike and vehicle travel to a destination of beauty and history in the river corridor away from the crowds of Yosemite National Park.

The project provides increased opportunities for tourism and recreation. Invasive plants can significantly degrade wildlife habitat. In addition, management of YST and Italian thistle allows native plant species to flourish, making the targeted area more appealing, scenic and enjoyable. The Wild & Scenic Merced River corridor is a vital component of the region's tourist-driven economy.

The work of this project, which takes place on lands managed by BLM, USFS, and the NPS, clearly enhances public use and enjoyment. Reducing the infestations of invasives on these public lands directly increases people's use and enjoyment of the area. Thousands of visitors will not flock to see and photograph hillsides of yellow starthistle, nor will they venture on trails crowded by Italian thistle.

Controlling invasives along the river certainly assists the regional economy. The Merced River Corridor is central to the region's economy which is dependent on tourism. Removal of YST and Italian thistle and the resulting restoration of native species increases the attraction of the tourist dollars of fishermen, campers, hikers, birders, swimmers, rafters, kayakers, and sightseers.

The project reduces the spread of invasives into valuable ranching and agricultural areas adjacent and downstream to the targeted area and aids in the preservation of working landscapes. Nationwide, invasive weeds in pastures and farmland cost an estimated \$33 billion per year. One YST plant can produce up to 10,000 seeds in a single season in addition to significantly depleting the soil of moisture. The State Water Resources Control Board has recently acknowledged that control of weeds could significantly conserve water. So controlling YST improves both the quantity and quality of water destined for agricultural irrigation.

### **D. Cooperation and Community Support**

1. The UMRWC has an excellent eight-year history of partnering with the Bureau of Land Management on projects in the Merced River Canyon: weed work each season, plus water quality and recreational area monitoring, training sessions for rafters, and hosting interpretive programs for the public. Effective active control of invasive weeds requires strategies that encompass geographic, not political or jurisdictional boundaries. While the BLM has been the lead agency cooperating with the



UMRWC in work on its lands, crews from the National Park Service and the US Forest Service have also participated in managing invasive weeds in that area. Through participation in groups such as the Mariposa County Integrated Weed Management team and the Central Sierra Watershed Committee, the UMRWC partners with Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, Cal Trans, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Mariposa County Farm Bureau, Mariposa County Public Works, Mariposa County Resource Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of California Cooperative Extension, and the Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner. Seventy five people and/or families have indicated their support of the Council's efforts by becoming members of the UMRWC.

2. The goal of invasive eradication and control was identified by the original stakeholders who crafted the watershed plan for the Upper Merced River Watershed in 2001.

- a) Since 2001, federal agencies (NPS, USFS, BLM and NRCS) have partnered with the UMRWC and will continue to provide technical expertise and advice. An Executive Committee has regularly advised the watershed council. Employees of several agencies, including NPS and BLM, as well as a diverse group of individuals, volunteer in various projects or as members of the Executive Committee. Support letters from ten stakeholders/partners are enclosed.
- b) The Upper Merced River Watershed Council was formed in 2001 by a group of stakeholders who collaborated to identify key goals for the watershed. The UMRWC has built a community-based stakeholder group of over 400 citizens and organizations that includes over 75 enthusiastic and active volunteers. The UMRWC actively recruits the participation of community members in the program through media press releases, the organization's website, and its newsletter. In addition, UMRWC staff members attend events where individuals are contacted about volunteer opportunities, and staff presents informational programs. Stakeholders have been surveyed about their priorities and interests for the watershed. The ideas and concerns of stakeholders are considered in developing this and other programs.

3. There are no known objections to the ongoing or proposed invasive management project.

4. Cooperation with Mariposa County Unified School District provides regular opportunities for watershed education to youth. Displays and interpretive activities at the SNC-funded Merced River Center at Briceburg are planned to target student interests and involvement. Informational programs will educate stakeholders about the work of this project as it relates to the ecosystem of the watershed and the Sierra Nevada. SNC will be acknowledged for its role in funding this project and supporting protection of the Sierra Nevada and the watershed.

5. This project is based on the Annual Plan of the Mariposa County Resource Conservation District, the most recent management plans for the three federal agencies (NPS, USFS, BLM), the pending NPS Merced River Plan, Memorandum of Understanding of the Sierra – San Joaquin Noxious Weed Alliance, and the 2008 Mariposa County General Plan. 85% of the watershed is under federal agency jurisdiction. Existing agency plans in the watershed are expected to support the sustainability of this program. There are no known adverse impacts on this project from other plans.

6. Benefits of the completed project will be communicated locally and regionally through:

- informational articles and updates.
- details of the project shared with decision makers such as the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors and agency officials.
- informational presentations and updates to community groups and individual stakeholders, as well as local students.

- updates and reports shared with Central Sierra Watershed Committee; Mariposa County, Chowchilla Red Top, and Coarsegold Resource Conservation Districts; the Mariposa County Integrated Weed Management Committee, the Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council; and the Sierra-San Joaquin Noxious Weed Alliance.

### **E. Project Design, Management, and Sustainability**

1. The UMRWC will be the project's lead agency and fiscal manager. The Council has been engaged in similar weed work since 2003, first as part of the Mariposa County Resource Conservation District and now as an independent nonprofit organization. The staff is very experienced in project planning. They have carried out invasive management projects and managed all aspects of the process: planning and budgeting, arranging with partners to hire crews, overseeing logistics and supervising field work, and writing reports for the grantor.

Past grants successfully managed by the UMRWC (totaling over \$1.3 million) have been awarded by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Department of Conservation (DOC), Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and Sierra Nevada Alliance (SNA). The Council and its small staff have been enormously successful with invasive work and have earned an excellent statewide reputation.

- a) BLM, NPS, and USFS are partners who are committed to providing technical expertise and support valued at \$34,926 for this project. UMRWC has worked with all these partners on successful invasive weed management, water quality and conservation, education and outreach, and other aspects of watershed care. UMRWC will lead and coordinate the project. BLM, USFS and NPS will continue to advise on the project. These partners are familiar with crew needs and will supply campsites, tools, and crew supervision.
- b) The UMRWC staff regularly attends training (California Invasive Plant Council) and meetings (Weed Management Area) where information is shared. The Staff has presented training on invasive weed management. Staffs from partners NPS, USFS, and BLM are experienced botanists and outdoor recreation planners.
- c) With close to ten years of grants experience, the UMRWC is fully familiar with all aspects of successful project planning and management.
  - i. The Council is intimately familiar with the river corridor terrain, the location of invasives, and any previous work in the area. Existing maps of invasives have been obtained from the project partners, and the Council created its own.
  - ii. Both UMRWC and the project partners have extensive expertise and experience in carrying out invasive removal projects and completing work on schedule. UMRWC has consulted with partners to create a work schedule that will accomplish the goal of managing YST and Italian starthistle in all four geographic areas of the planned project and completing the project on schedule.
  - iii. While other groups have chosen the seeming ease of spraying herbicide, the UMRWC has a very successful track record (using manual methods in repeated treatments) producing sustainable results with little regrowth.
  - iv. Hand-pulling and mowing are very effective and have the least impact in the steep canyon terrain.
  - v. n.a.
  - vi. The UMRWC has developed a multifaceted monitoring process. Before and after photos are taken of the area each season; in addition line transects are created and invasives are counted before and after treatment. Maps are consulted and parameters of infestations are compared before and after, when necessary.

2. Without question the manual method of removing invasives can be continued over years without damage to the environment or community. All three federal agencies are very committed to integrated weed management on the lands under their care. In addition, the botanists and resource people are also very aware of invasive weeds on other nearby public lands (contiguous or not). The NPS has volunteered to help with invasive work on the lands belonging to the USFS. Resource divisions of these federal agencies understand that invasive control works only if everyone does it. In the Briceburg area, most of the principal responsibility falls on the BLM by geography (and the UMRWC by voluntary action). In the El Portal region, both the NPS and USFS oversee adjacent lands. Both agencies have been working for years on the hillsides in that part of the river corridor with both manual methods and spraying herbicide. And both agencies enthusiastically welcome the additional help of the UMRWC.

3. Both BLM and USFS (Sierra National Forest), federal land managers, have committed to long-term management of the land once the invasives are controlled. Both agencies regularly work in the areas described in this project. They have worked on invasive eradication for more than ten years and are clear that they will continue to protect their (and SNC's) investment. Both have resource staff whose job is to monitor and report any invasive regrowth, so that it can be worked into the coming year's treatment plans. All public lands should be this well cared for.

a) All the federal agencies involved are committed land stewards. Not only are their management plans filled with language about protecting and preserving public lands, their employees are trained in resource management. For the most part these people live, play and work close to these areas and feel passionately about restoring a more natural landscape than the one covered with yellow starthistle and Italian thistle.

b) All the parties (UMRWC under the Mariposa County RCD) involved in this project have signed a 2008 Memorandum of Understanding of the Sierra – San Joaquin Noxious Weed Alliance which mutually commits them to working together for the purposes of increasing invasive public education, preventing new infestations, exchanging information, combining resources for effective control, and facilitating cooperation on weed management.

c) Watershed and agency people are alert to the time frame for each invasive at various elevations and microclimates. Follow up surveys will be scheduled for bloom times for optimum removal of any outliers (April – May for Italian and May, June, July for YST). Knowledgeable volunteers may also be used. Numerous local residents are active in the California Native Plant Society.

d) Because the entire project is on federal lands, the management plan is supported by and follows the recommendations of the federal land managers involved. In addition, the UMRCD has its own Watershed Plan: A Collaborative Action Strategy for the Upper Merced River Watershed, March 2006 to which the federal agencies agreed. It lists numerous additional plans which informed that document.

e) The Watershed Council's work on this project is an excellent model for a collaborative approach to invasive removal (or any other shared work) on public lands. Sadly, the federal land management agencies, although they may wish to, have few opportunities to participate in a cooperative approach to lingering resource problems. Each agency with its own budget and bureaucracy often feels overwhelmed by its own issues. However, when approached by a community-based, stakeholder group, all the agencies involved and their personnel are very interested and enthusiastic about participating. They are eager to share their experiences and as many resources they can muster.

Detailed Budget Form					
State of California - Sierra Nevada Conservancy					
<b>APPLICANT NAME:</b> Upper Merced River Watershed Council					
<b>SNC REF #:</b>					
<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b> Invasive Weed Management in the Upper Merced River Corridor					
<b>PROJECT TYPE (choose one):</b>					
<input type="checkbox"/> ACQUISITION <input type="checkbox"/> SITE IMPROVEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RESTORATION <input type="checkbox"/> PRE PROJECT PLANNING					
SECTION ONE DIRECT COSTS	QTY	UNIT*	UNIT COST	SUBTOTAL	SNC Grant Request
Staff/Personnel Expense - Project Related Wages/Benefits					
Project Mgt Staff Wages	684	hour	\$40.00	\$27,360.00	
Field Mgt Staff Wages	972	hour	\$40.00	\$38,880.00	
Total Wages	1656	hour	\$40.00	\$66,240.00	
Federal & state deductions (taxes, SS, Medicare, disability, unemployment)	15%	total wages		\$9,936.00	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$76,176.00</b>	<b>\$76,176.00</b>
Travel/Meeting Expense - Project Related					
Mileage to local Weed Management Area Meetings	1,080	miles	\$0.50	\$540.00	
Mileage to Project Sites	2,508	miles	\$0.50	\$1,254.00	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$1,794.00</b>	<b>\$1,794.00</b>
Contracts/Consultants - Project Related					
CDC Crews	40	days	\$225.00	\$9,000.00	
ACE Crews	60	days	\$1,100.00	\$66,000.00	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$75,000.00</b>	<b>\$75,000.00</b>
Equipment Leases/Purchases - Project Dependent					
Hand tools, weed eaters				\$2,200.00	
GPS unit & software				\$800.00	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>
<b>DIRECT COSTS SUBTOTAL:</b>				<b>\$155,970.00</b>	<b>\$155,970.00</b>
SECTION TWO INDIRECT COSTS	QTY	UNIT*	UNIT COST	SUBTOTAL	SNC Grant Request
Staff/Personnel Expense - Wages/Benefits/Consultants/Contract Labor					
Workers' Comp Proj Mgt		1.50%	\$27,360.00	\$410.40	
Workers' Comp Field Staff		16.50%	\$38,880.00	\$6,415.20	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$6,825.60</b>	<b>\$6,825.60</b>

Printed Materials - Project related Publications/Communications/Public Outreach					
			\$200.00	\$200.00	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$200.00</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>
Outreach/Education - Trainers fees/ facilitators/Facility Expense					
Presenter's Fee	2		\$100.00	\$200.00	
Facility Rental	2		\$200.00	\$400.00	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$600.00</b>	<b>\$600.00</b>
Liability Insurance					
	3	years	\$1,200.00	\$3,600.00	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$3,600.00</b>	<b>\$3,600.00</b>
<b>INDIRECT COSTS SUBTOTAL:</b>				<b>\$11,225.60</b>	<b>\$11,225.60</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$167,195.60</b>	<b>\$167,195.60</b>
<b>SECTION THREE</b>					
<b>Administrative Costs (Description - Not to exceed 15% of Project Total):</b>					
Rent	12	months	\$625.00	\$7,500.00	
Utilities	12	months	\$65.00	\$780.00	
Phone & Internet	12	months	\$190.00	\$2,280.00	
Copy Machine	9	months	\$106.00	\$954.00	
Office Supplies	3	months	\$40.00	\$120.00	
Bookkeeping & clerical	336	hours	\$40.00	\$13,440.00	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$25,074.00</b>	<b>\$25,074.00</b>
<b>SNC TOTAL GRANT REQUEST:</b>				<b>\$192,269.60</b>	<b>\$192,269.60</b>

<b>Project Budget Details</b>					
<b>State of California - Sierra Nevada Conservancy</b>					
<b>APPLICANT NAME:</b>		Upper Merced River Watershed Council			
<b>SNC REF #:</b>					
<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>		Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor			
<b>PROJECT TYPE (choose one):</b>					
<input type="checkbox"/> ACQUISITION <input type="checkbox"/> SITE IMPROVEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RESTORATION <input type="checkbox"/> PRE PROJECT PLANNING					
<b>SECTION FOUR</b>					
<b>OTHER PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>UNIT*</b>	<b>UNIT COST</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Status**</b>
List other funding or in-kind contributors to project					
Bureau of Land Management				\$13,400.00	
US Forest Service				\$5,250.00	
National Park Service				\$2,900.00	
Natural Resources Conservation Service				\$2,576.00	
USFS/BLM Campgrounds				\$1,800.00	
USFS/BLM Equipment				\$9,000.00	
<b>Total Other Contributions:</b>				<b>\$34,926.00</b>	

## **10. Performance Measures**

### A. 1. Number of people reached

- ✓ One article per year will appear in local media.
- ✓ Annual updates will occur in the UMRWC newsletter with 350 subscribers.
- ✓ Information will be continuously available on the UMRWC website.

### A. 2. Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada

\$34,926 has been leveraged for the Sierra Nevada.

### A. 3. Number and type of jobs created

1.6 full time equivalent jobs created: temporary workers are hired to remove invasives, for a total of 8,000 hours; project management and field management staff, bookkeeping and clerical staff total 1,992 hours.

### A. 4. Number of new, improved or preserved economic activities

At least ten activities that contribute to the local economy (hiking, swimming, camping, kayaking, rafting, picnicking, sightseeing, birding, fishing, wildflower watching) will be preserved and improved. Outdoor enthusiasts generally avoid using resources that are difficult to assess and instead spend their time (and money) in areas that are more pleasing than those infested with thorny invasives. Therefore removing the weeds enhances the area for recreational use. However, no actual statistics for the area are available.

### B. 6. Linear feet of stream bank protected or restored

12 miles of the Merced River stream bank restored by removing invasive plants

### B. 8. Number of special significance sites protected or preserved

Three sites of special significance are within the project area:

1. Merced Wild and Scenic River
2. Merced River Wilderness Study Area
3. Merced River Special Recreation Management Area

### D. 13. Acres of land improved or restored

A minimum of 80 acres of extremely sensitive riparian habitat will be improved.

## **11. Environmental setting and impacts**

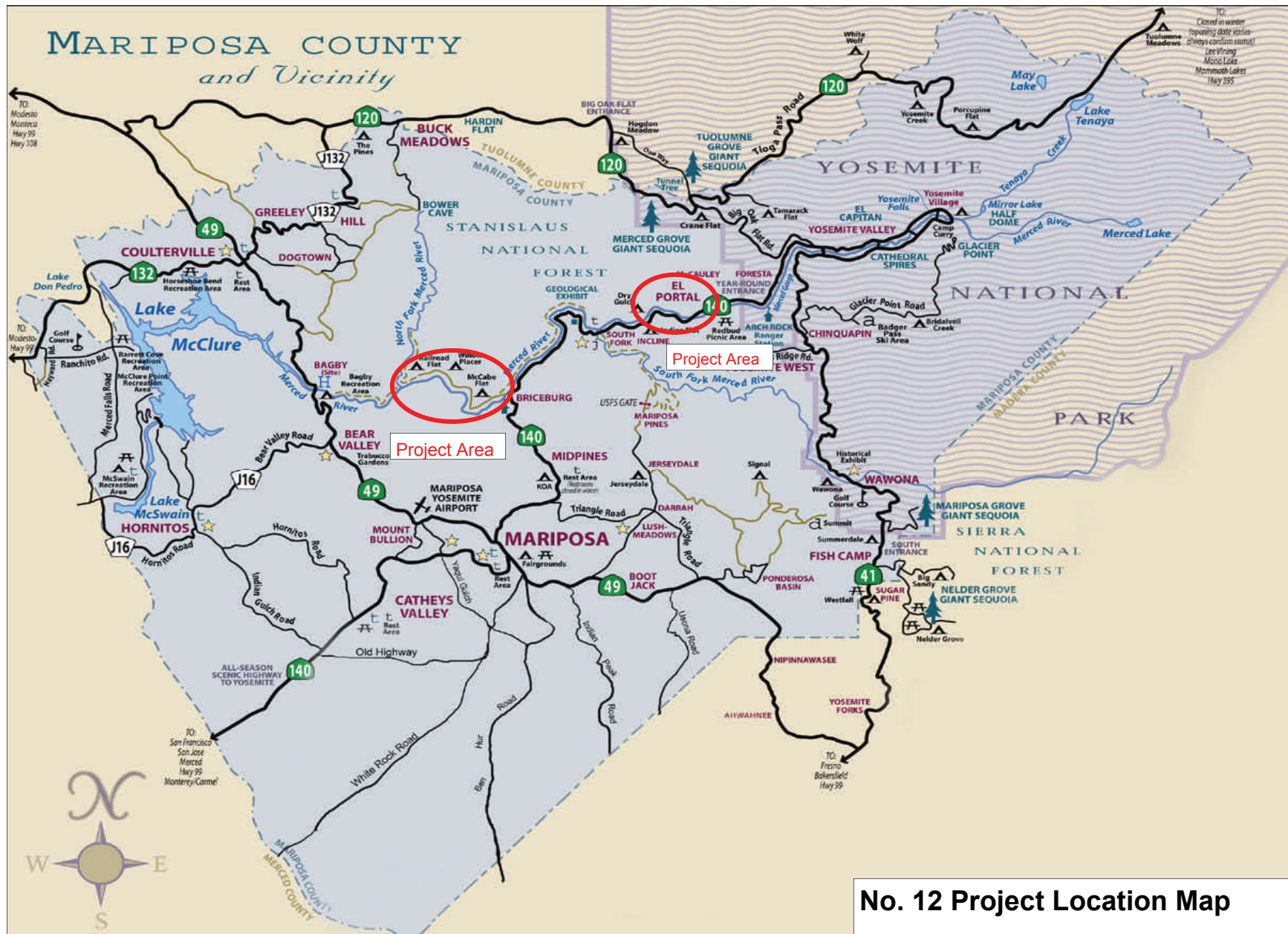
The areas of the work in the project site are adjacent to the Merced Wild & Scenic River, and are under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service. Proposed work does not conflict with land use plans or policies of either agency. Each of the targeted areas is a prime recreational draw for the region, attracting hikers, swimmers, rafters, kayakers, campers, and sightseers. No changes in land use are anticipated.

Sensitive species have been addressed in NEPA documentation.

Global climate change is expected to reduce Sierra snowpack by up to 50%, and is already causing earlier melting of the snowpack. Water flow is increasing in winter and decreasing in spring and summer when recreation pressure is highest on water use and invasives are at their peak of water consumption.

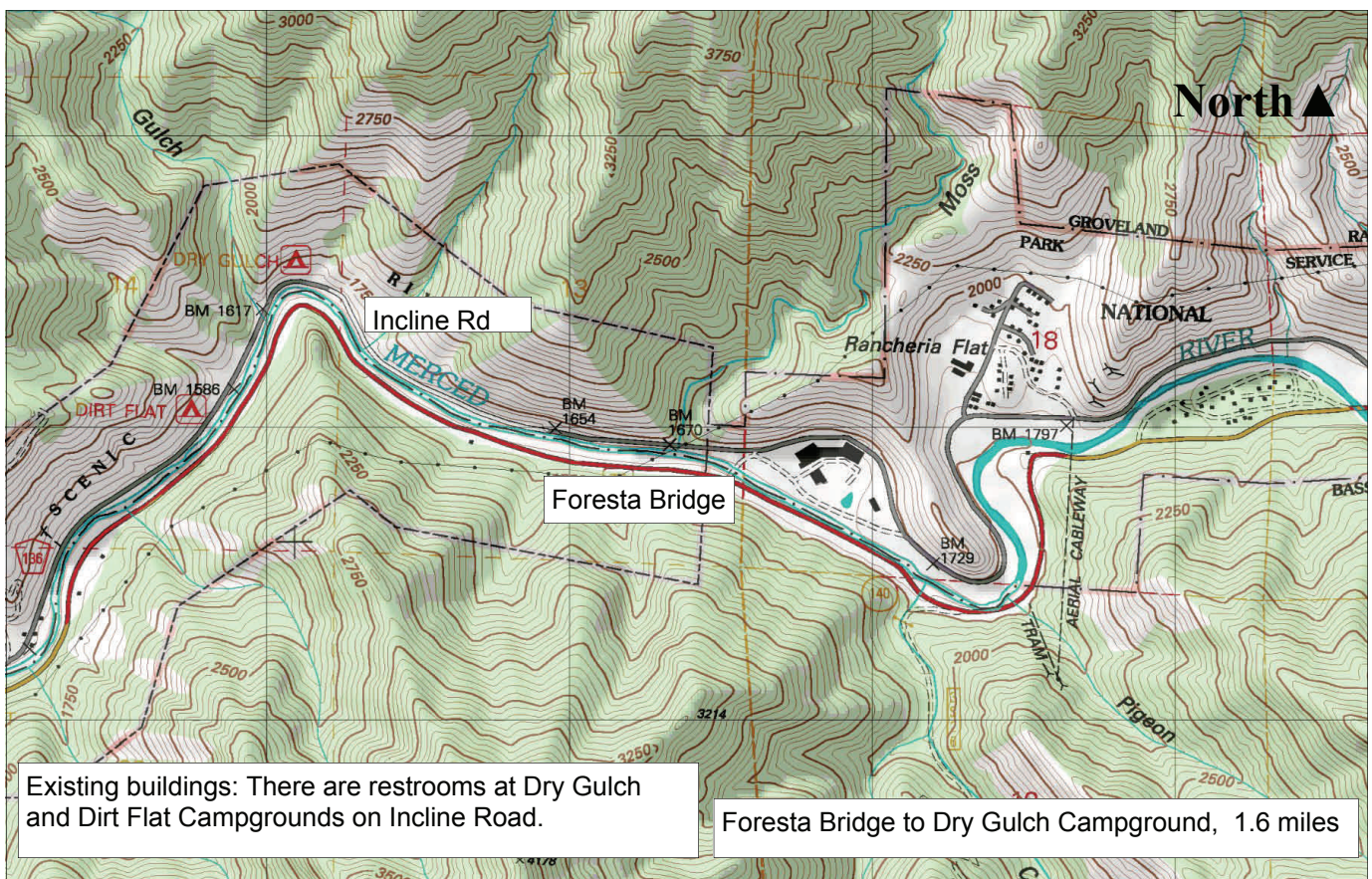
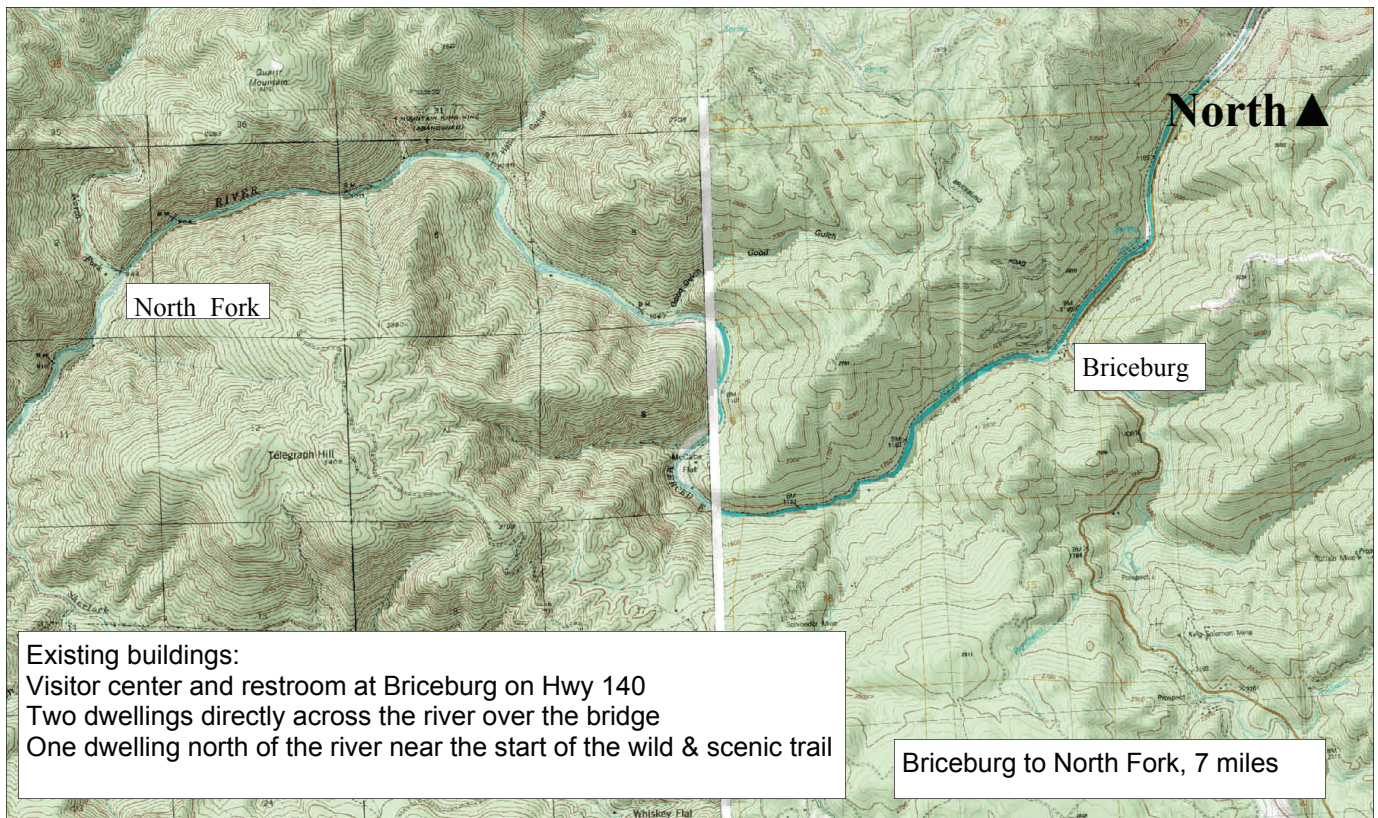
Emissions that contribute to climate change will be reduced where possible by minimizing mechanical weed removal methods and vehicle travel to and in the project.

No dirt will be removed. No chemicals will be used. Only handpulling and mowing will be used.

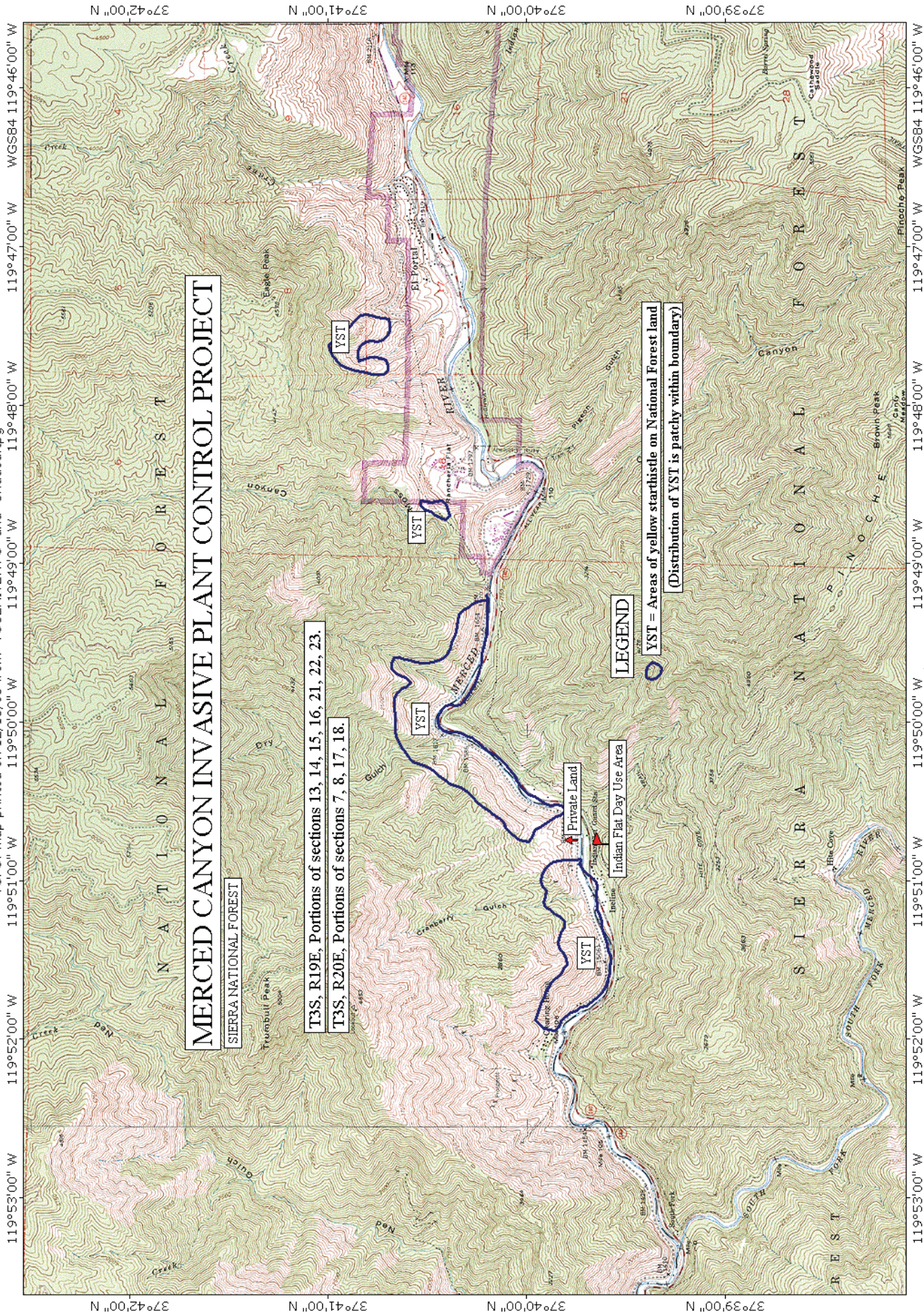


No. 12 Project Location Map

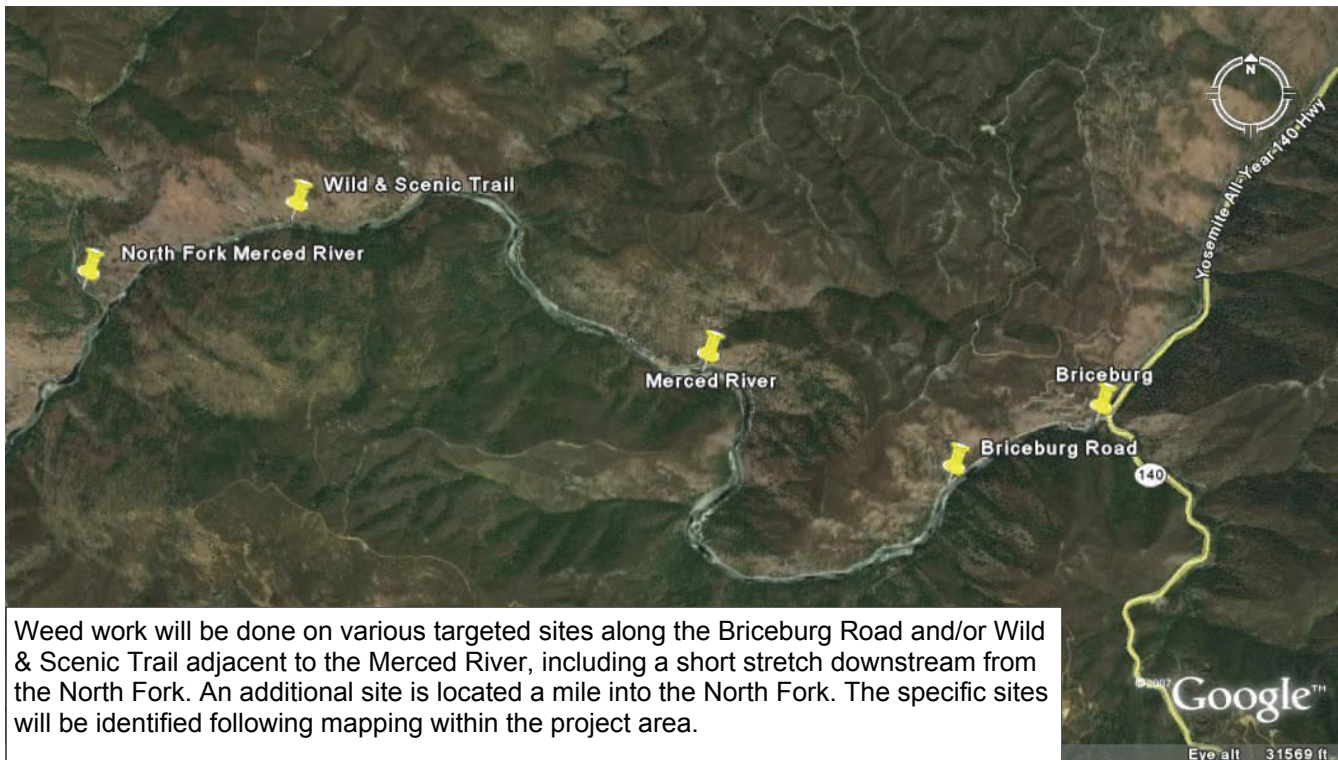








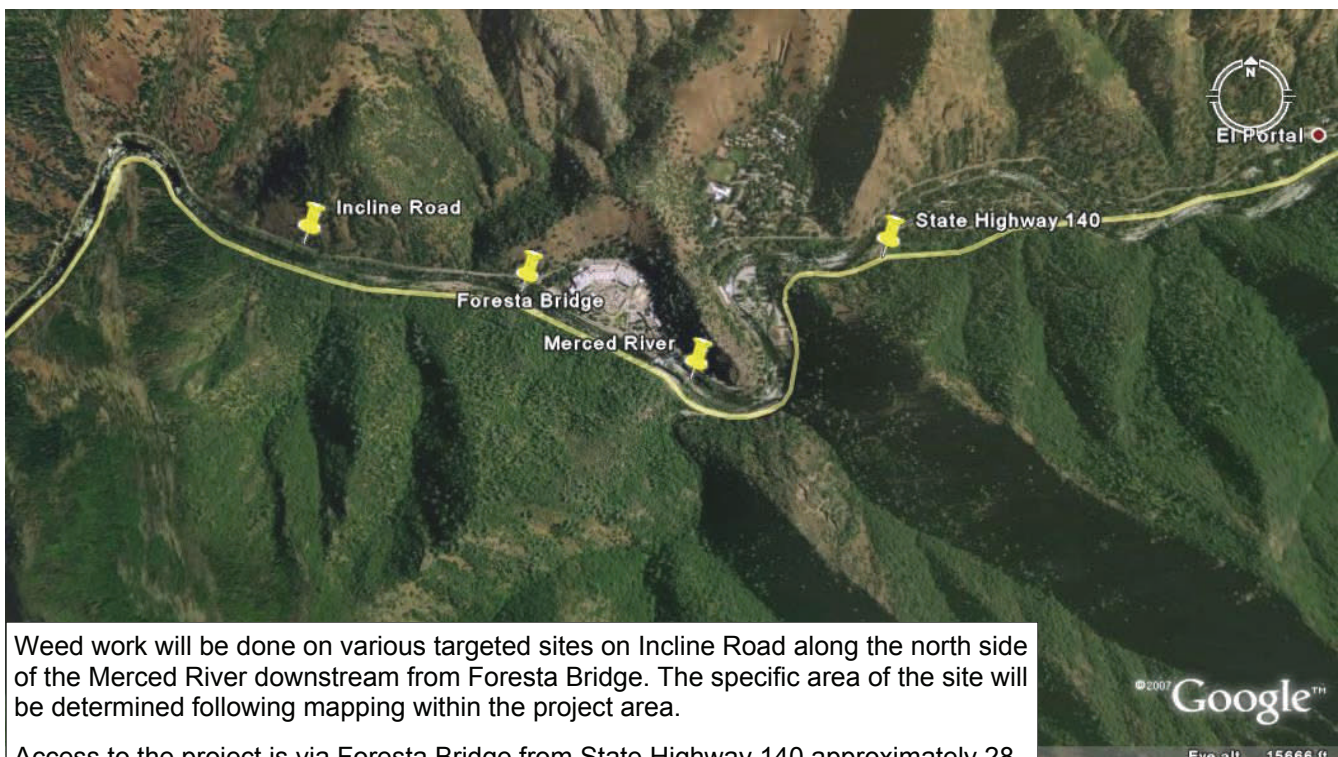




Weed work will be done on various targeted sites along the Briceburg Road and/or Wild & Scenic Trail adjacent to the Merced River, including a short stretch downstream from the North Fork. An additional site is located a mile into the North Fork. The specific sites will be identified following mapping within the project area.

Access to the project area is through the BLM Briceburg day-use area west of State Highway 140, approximately 14 miles north of Mariposa, California.

Existing buildings: Visitor center at Briceburg on Hwy 140, two dwellings directly across the river over the bridge, one dwelling north of river near start of the wild & scenic trail



Weed work will be done on various targeted sites on Incline Road along the north side of the Merced River downstream from Foresta Bridge. The specific area of the site will be determined following mapping within the project area.

Access to the project is via Foresta Bridge from State Highway 140 approximately 28 miles east of Mariposa, California.

Existing buildings: Restrooms at Dry Gulch and Dirt Flat Campgrounds on Incline Road.

**No. 15 SITE PLAN**













## **19. Land Tenure**

The project site is federal property under the jurisdiction of the project partners, BLM and USFS. Both agencies are fully supportive of this project. Letters of support are attached.



# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: ☐ Office of Planning and Research  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121  
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Dr. Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603 (Address)

☒ County Clerk  
County of Mariposa  
4982 10th St.  
Mariposa, CA 95338

SEP 3 2010  
KEITH M. WILLIAMS  
MARIPOSA COUNTY CLERK  
KAREN M. HERMAN

Project Title: Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor

Project Location - Specific: along Incline Rd. downriver from Foresta Bridge; along the  
Briecburg Rd. from Briecburg to the North Fork; targeted sections along the North  
Fork and on the Merced below the  
confluence of the North Fork

Project Location - City: Midpines Project Location - County: Mariposa

## Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

Nature: Utilize hand labor to manage invasive weeds

Purpose: Manage invasive weeds in targeted areas listed above

Beneficiaries: Mariposa County residents, tourists, residents downstream

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Upper Merced River Watershed Council

## Exempt Status: (check one)

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);  
☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));  
☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));  
☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15304 Minor alterations to land  
☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt: The project is on land owned & managed by the  
Bureau of Land Management & /or the US Forest Service. This is  
a federal project on federal land.

## Lead Agency

Contact Person: Connie Nielson Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 209-966-2221

## If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.  
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Signature: Connie & Nielson Date: 9/3/10 Title: Coordi'nator

☐ Signed by Lead Agency

Date received for filing at OPR:

☒ Signed by Applicant

Revised October 1989





**United States Department of the Interior**  
**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Mother Lode Field Office  
5152 Hillsdale Circle  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762  
[www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode](http://www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode)



6840  
CA 180.21

Liana Lopez, Field Technician  
Upper Merced River Watershed  
P O Box 5008-201  
Mariposa, CA 95338

Dear Ms. Lopez,

The project titled Invasive Weed Management in the Upper Merced River Corridor is a valuable project to reduce the possible proliferation of weedy species along the river trail from Briceburg to the North Fork Merced post Telegraph Fire. The Watershed Council has been very active in past years in reducing weed spread in this area.

The project will not have impacts to threatened or endangered species. The only potential species that could occur in the general area is the threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle. Elderberry bushes, necessary habitat for the beetle, have not been documented as occurring in the project area. This project fits categorical exemption (DOI post-fire rehabilitation activities) under the NEPA process.

If you have any questions, please call Peggy Cranston at (916) 941-3136 or [pcransto@ca.blm.gov](mailto:pcransto@ca.blm.gov).

Sincerely,

W.S. Haigh  
Field Manager

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

**FAX TRANSMITTAL**

# of pages 1

To	Anne Steed	From	Peggy Cranston
Dept./Agency	or Liana Lopez Upper Merced River Watershed	Phone #	916-941-3136
Fax #	209-966-5268	Fax #	

NSN 7540-01-317-7368

5099-101

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
USDA Forest Service  
MERCED CANYON INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL PROJECT  
Bass Lake Ranger District  
Sierra National Forest  
Mariposa County, California

## I. INTRODUCTION

Despite intense efforts to control invasive non-native plants such as yellow starthistle, Italian thistle, and tocalote with hand-pulling, they have been spreading within the upper Merced River Canyon in the vicinity of El Portal. The infestation is concentrated in two major areas: (1) the vicinity of El Portal on National Forest, National Park, and private lands; and (2) downstream from Briceburg on Bureau of Land Management and private lands. About 10 miles of river canyon between these two areas remains relatively free of yellow starthistle at this time, because of yearly patrols and hand pulling. Seeds are constantly being spread by the wind, river, vehicles, forest visitors, and wildlife. This stretch of river canyon is remarkably diverse biologically, with a great variety of native plants and animals. The spread of yellow starthistle and other weeds is a very real threat to the ongoing ecological health of the river canyon.

Land management agencies and concerned citizens have been working to reduce the yellow starthistle infestation. On the National Forest, hand-pulling of yellow starthistle has been ongoing since 1998. The National Park Service has been hand-pulling since 1996 in El Portal, Yosemite Valley, and Tuolumne Meadows. In 2000, the Park Service began mowing treatments at the proper time to prevent seed set (around June, when flowers are just beginning to appear). The Bureau of Land Management has been doing manual and mechanical control downstream of the national forest boundary in partnership with the Upper Merced Watershed Committee and private landowners. In 2003, the Woodlot Fire burned some of the yellow starthistle north of El Portal creating the potential for an explosive spread of the weed into burned ground. The Stanislaus National Forest and Yosemite National Park were granted funding through the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation process to control the spread. The yellow starthistle infestation spills onto adjacent private lands at Clearinghouse, and the Mariposa County Agriculture Department is offering a cost-share program to assist property owners with controlling yellow starthistle, if they would like.

## II. PROPOSED ACTION

The Bass Lake Ranger District proposes to use herbicide and manual methods to control yellow starthistle (YST) and other invasive non-native plants in the Merced River Canyon (see Map 1) as part of an Integrated Pest Management Program. The herbicide to be used is glyphosate, with the surfactant R-11 or \_\_\_\_\_. They would be applied using backpack sprayers selectively on target weeds by workers on foot in late May or early June, when the yellow starthistle has bolted but has not yet fully bloomed. This

timing minimizes impacts to non-target plants, which have largely either finished fruiting (woody species and perennials) or have set seed and died back (annuals). Manual methods such as pulling and mowing would be used near water and as a follow up to herbicides when practical.

The project area is just west and north of the Yosemite National Park Administrative site at El Portal. Slopes are primarily south-facing and are vegetated by chaparral and oak woodland. Elevations range from 1700 to 3300 feet. The project area encompasses an overall area of about 150 acres, although the actual acreage occupied by invasive weeds is less. The foremost area needing treatment with herbicides is upslope of the Merced River along about 3 miles of Incline Road from Moss Creek west about 3 miles to the private land boundary at Clearinghouse, within the Stanislaus National Forest, (administered by the Sierra National Forest). The legal location for this portion of the project is T3S, R19E, portions of sections 13-16 and 21-23. There is an additional area infested by yellow starthistle just north of El Portal, in an area of the Stanislaus National Forest outside the zone administered by the Sierra National Forest. This portion of the project is located in T3S, R20 E, portions of sections 8 and 17.

### III. PURPOSE AND NEED

The populations of yellow starthistle within the Merced River canyon (a wild and scenic river corridor) have increased dramatically over the past few years. This project is necessary to remove these populations before the infestations become unmanageably and to prevent the future spread of starthistle to currently uninfested areas. Biological diversity, wildlife habitat such as winter mule deer habitat and recreational values of the Merced River Canyon will continue to be degraded if action is not taken promptly.

Due to the extent and density of the yellow starthistle, herbicides will be required, in addition to manual methods, to effectively control these weeds. Manual methods of control are currently limited to a narrow strip directly next to the Merced River and Incline Road, in an attempt to prevent further spread. The slope above this band must be treated with herbicide because the terrain is steep and difficult to walk, and hand-pulling or mowing are impractical and less safe given the density and acreage of thistle present. Also, although there is a good cover of vegetation on the slopes currently, the soil on these slopes is loose and easily dislodged. Application of herbicides requires far less time be spent walking these steep slopes, resulting in less risk to workers, and less soil disturbance, erosion and sedimentation into the Merced River.

### IV. DECISION TO BE MADE

The decision to be made is whether to implement the proposed action or continue the current approach of containing the yellow starthistle infestation with hand methods to the extent possible. The Stanislaus National Forest Supervisor has delegated authority to the Bass Lake District Ranger, who will be the single deciding official for this decision. The deciding official may modify the proposed action as deemed necessary to better meet the purpose and need of the proposed action.

This proposal is consistent with management direction for noxious weeds in the Sierra National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended, Forest Service Manual (FSM 2080), the Federal Plant Protection Act of 2000, and state and local laws and regulations.

## V. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The project was published in the Sierra National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions beginning in 2001.

A letter requesting comments on the proposed action was mailed on December 15, 2003 to members of the public who had expressed an interest in this or similar projects, adjacent land owners and Yosemite National Park. Comments were received from the Regional Pesticide Coordinator and three organizations. They are summarized in Appendix B.

On January 8, 2004, a public meeting was held at the Community Hall at Midpines Park and on February 7, a field trip was conducted to the project area. The purpose of both was to familiarize members of the public, adjacent landowners and National Park Service Staff with the proposed action and the project area and to request comments. No written comments were received.

## VI. ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action Alternative (1): The Bass Lake Ranger District would use herbicide and manual methods to control yellow starthistle and other invasive non-native plants in the Merced River Canyon as part of an Integrated Pest Management Program. The herbicide used would be glyphosate, with the surfactant R-11 or \_\_\_\_\_. They would be applied using backpack sprayers selectively on target weeds by workers on foot in late May or early June, when the yellow starthistle has bolted but has not yet fully bloomed. Manual methods such as pulling and mowing would be used near water, below the Incline Road and as a follow up to herbicides when practical. The treatments would be repeated every year for ten years or until the thistle infestation is eradicated.

Project design features for the Proposed Action Alternative (1):

- Moss Creek and any unnamed intermittent streams containing water would have a 50 foot no herbicide buffer and none would be applied between Incline Road and the Merced River to assure no herbicide entered water.
- No herbicide application would occur between the first frontal system after October 15<sup>th</sup> that results in greater than ¼ inch of rainfall and April 15<sup>th</sup> of any year to minimize impacts to amphibian species.
- Buffers would be established around areas of significance to Native Americans (known gathering areas and plants of known cultural significance).



- Elderberry shrubs would be protected by having a 100 foot no herbicide buffer to protect potential habitat for valley elderberry longhorn beetle.
- For Congdon's woolly sunflower (a Forest Service Sensitive Plant), would have a 5 foot no herbicide buffer or plants would be covered with plastic to prevent direct contact with herbicide.
- All applicable pesticide laws and label restrictions would be followed to ensure human health and safety.

No Action Alternative (2): The Bass Lake Ranger District would use manual methods to contain the current infestations of yellow starthistle and other invasive non-native plants from spreading in size or to other parts of the Merced River Canyon. The treatments would be repeated every year for ten years. This alternative would not eradicate the current infestations.

## VII. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Effects on Vegetation, Fire Risk and Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat: The project area is mainly a grassland with brush and a very scattered oak and gray pine overstory. A narrow strip of riparian brush and trees are scattered along the Merced River and seasonal tributaries. Annual grasses, forbs, and scattered brush, live oak, and gray pine grow upslope of the riparian areas. The canyon in this area is extremely steep and rocky, with thin soils. During the rainless season, the vegetation dies or persists with low internal moisture making it highly susceptible to wildfire.

The only habitat potentially suitable for any terrestrial threatened, endangered, proposed or candidate wildlife species within or adjacent to the project area is a few scattered elderberry bushes (*Sambucus* sp.). These bushes were discovered during field surveys of the project area in 2002 and 2003. The elderberry bush is required habitat for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB), a threatened species. The larval VELB live and grow within elderberry stems >1" diameter, consuming the plant tissue, and, upon reaching maturity, burrow out of the stem leaving a visible "exit hole" (FWS, November, 1991). Searching for these holes gives an indication of whether or not the VELB are possibly using the elderberry bushes. To date, no exit holes have been located on bushes within the project area. Also in 1997, Highway 140 was surveyed for VELB habitat and only two elderberry bushes were located, both on the south side of the river. Neither of these had visible exit holes.

The only habitat for sensitive species within or adjacent to the project area is a small amount of potential habitat for the Western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*) within riparian areas along the Merced River and its tributaries. This bat roosts individually in trees (often cottonwoods) with dense foliage in or near riparian areas below 6,500' elevation (Bat Conservation International: [www.batcon.org/discover/species/lblosse.html](http://www.batcon.org/discover/species/lblosse.html)).

Cursory surveys for Western red bat (visual observation of riparian trees) were performed at the Indian Flat and Red Bud day use areas when the facilities were upgraded several years ago. No bats were seen during these surveys.

The project area is important winter range for the \_\_\_\_\_ Deer Heard.

Direct Effects: The late May or early June timing of the glyphosate application minimizes the impacts to non-target plants, which have largely either finished fruiting (woody species and perennials) or have set seed and died back (annuals). Woody plants and perennials would be lost where they are intertwined with yellow starthistle because the glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide that is absorbed through green foliage. However, it is not active in the soil so seeds present, including yellow starthistle, would germinate when conditions are favorable.

Since this project targets the removal of yellow starthistle, impacts to elderberry bushes are not expected. The only potential impact may come from herbicide overspray or drift. To avoid this potential, conservation guidelines for the protection of elderberry bushes will be implemented as described in the project design features for Alternative 1. These guidelines are adequate to provide complete avoidance of adverse effects (USDI FWS, 1999).

This project would not directly or indirectly effect suitable habitat for the Western red bat. The glyphosate application may kill or injure a small amount of non-target vegetation but this effect is expected to be temporary and very limited in scope.

The effects of manual methods on woody plants and perennials and on seeds present would be essentially the same as spraying glyphosate.

The effect on yellow starthistle would be to eliminate the noxious weed in a particular space on the landscape after application of glyphosate in about four successive years or a similar amount of hand pulling or mowing.

Indirect and Cumulative Effects: With repeated treatment of the yellow starthistle over several years as proposed under Alternative 1, it would be eliminated from the landscape and the mix of native species would take its place. There would be no change in the susceptibility of the vegetation to wildfire. The quality of wildlife habitat, especially winter deer range, would improve significantly.

Under Alternative 2, there would be no change in the current infestation.

Effects on Water Quality and Soil Productivity: The project area is mostly within the Merced River Wild and Scenic River corridor. The river is the water supply for downstream communities (the closest is XX miles) and eventually supplies irrigation water to the Central Valley. The soils are \_\_\_\_\_.

Direct Effects: The greatest risk of introducing glyphosate into the water would be by accidental spills. This risk would be minimized by implementation of BMP 5.11 which would limit transportation of herbicides to designated routes, specify batching and mixing locations and provide for a spill kit on site.

Effects to water quality with the use of glyphosate are not expected to occur because with the design measures in place, the herbicide would not be applied to or near open water.

According to a review of studies by Ghassemi and others (1981) glyphosate rapidly attaches to organic matter on top or in the soil and its mobility is very limited. The soils in the project area generally contain \_\_\_\_\_ or more percent organic matter in the top six inches. Because of its very low mobility in soil the only mechanism for off site movement of would be if it was attached to soil particles that were eroded and transported to another location. Normal hydrolysis found in a stream will not break the attachment of glyphosate to soil particles. So, even if the combination reached the water, it would not be in a form that can be taken up by plants or released through digestion by animals. It would not affect either surface or ground water quality.

From 1992 to 1995 surface water adjacent to projects involving the use of glyphosate was monitored resulting in no detections.

Glyphosate provides a means of vegetation control that causes no direct soil disturbance and the dead foliage and leaf drop onto the soil surface continues to provide protection from erosion until seeds present sprout. It biodegrades within weeks of application into natural products – carbon dioxide, nitrogen, phosphate and water. Effects on soil microflora are minimal and not pronounced.

The effects of pulling weeds out by the roots would be more disturbing to the soil than the use of glyphosate but the effect of mowing would be about the same.

Indirect and Cumulative Effects: The spaces left on the landscape by the elimination of yellow starthistle, would be occupied by new plants as the seeds present germinate with the annual rains providing additional soil cover. Unfortunately, many of these new plants would be yellow starthistle until the supply of this kind of seed is exhausted by the repetitive application of glyphosate, hand pulling or mowing.

The cumulative watershed effects (CWE) determined by using the Equivalent Roaded Acres (ERA) method as outlined in Forest Service Handbook 2509.22 is on file at the Bass Lake District Office and showed a response is unlikely.

Effects on Human Health and Safety:

Direct Effects: A risk assessment to determine the site-specific risks to human health and safety of using glyphosate in the commercial formulation, Accord, was prepared for the project. The hazard information, the application method (backpack spraying), and the number and characteristics of people that could come in contact with glyphosate is similar to many other projects undertaken by the District in recent years. The risk assessment is on file at the Bass Lake District Office.

Hazard analysis was accomplished by reviewing toxicity data in the literature and the Vegetation Management for Reforestation Final Environmental Impact Statement (VMFEIS, 1988) and identifying established acute toxicity values (LD50s), no observable effect levels (NOELs) for systemic and reproductive health effects. These data are summarized in the Toxicity Summary Table on page 2 of the risk assessment. Glyphosate is considered to be slightly toxic to humans. It is non-irritating to the skin and only slightly irritating to the eyes. There is no evidence that it causes birth defects, cancer, neurotoxicity, immunotoxicity or endocrine disruption (SERA, 1996 & 2002).

The application rate per acre is based on the estimate that glyphosate would be mixed with water at 5 percent by volume and applied to all the yellow starthistle which is about \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the vegetation in the areas to be treated. On this project, glyphosate mixed at 5 percent and applied spray-to-wet to \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the foliage would result in 9 to 24 gallons of mix per acre or 1.8 to 4.8 pounds of active ingredient per acre. Following the same methodology used in the VMFEIS and this application rate, doses were calculated for potentially exposed workers and members of the public.

The potential exposure (dose) to glyphosate from spraying yellow starthistle with backpack sprayers was developed for project workers and the general public. The results are in the Summary of Exposure Scenarios Table on page 3 of the risk assessment.

A margin of safety (MOS) was calculated for each dose estimate for workers and the public by dividing the systemic and reproductive NOEL for the herbicides by the estimated dose. A benchmark MOS of 100 is commonly accepted by the scientific community, regulatory agencies, and the Forest Service for setting acceptable exposure rates. Values of 100 or greater are considered to pose an acceptable or low risk to human health and safety. All MOS values calculated for doses resulting from this application rate are greater than 100, except for the reproductive effect to workers when applying more than 3.4 pounds of active ingredient (17 gallons of mix) per acre. As long as workers wear safety equipment as specified in the design measures (protective clothing, eye protection and gloves), the MOS for the reproductive effect would be above 100 at the maximum estimated dose (4.8 pounds of active ingredient per acre). Therefore, the risks to workers and to members of the public are low.



The only inert ingredient contained in Accord is water. However, the herbicide would be mixed with R-11 or \_\_\_\_\_ surfactant and dye, usually Colorfast Purple. The EPA has categorized approximately 1200 inert ingredients into four lists. List 1 and 2 contain inert ingredients of toxicological concern (Fed. Reg. 54:48314-16). List 3 includes substances such as soaps and List 4 substances such as corn oil, honey and water. Neither R-11, \_\_\_\_\_, Colorfast Purple or inerts included in formulating them are on List 1 or 2. So, there would be almost no risk to the health and safety of the workers or public from these additives.

Cumulative Effects: Use of glyphosate could result in cumulative doses of herbicides to workers or the general public. Cumulative doses result from (1) additive doses from various routes of exposure from this project and (2) additive doses if an individual is exposed to other herbicide treatments.

Treated areas in the project would have a several glyphosate applications over the years, so a worker or a member of the general public could be exposed to a second dose during application plus any residual herbicide remaining on the site. Since glyphosate persists in the environment less than 3 months (VMFEIS, page 4-9), no additive herbicide doses from a second application are anticipated.

The Park Service and adjacent landowners do not plan any application of glyphosate in the foreseeable future that could result in an additive dose.

Synergistic effects of glyphosate with other chemicals are not anticipated in the project area because they have not occurred when it has been used extensively in other forestry and agricultural applications.

For all instances, cumulative effects would be negligible with the exception of where individuals use herbicides at home on the same day of an exposure resulting from the project which would double the human health risk.

Effects on Heritage Resources and Native American Cultural Sites:

Effects on Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, Candidate and Sensitive Species:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: For the **federally listed threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate wildlife species, the Biological Assessment (BA)**, which is on file at the Bass Lake District Office, determined there would be the following effect on the species potentially present in the project area. The determinations are:

For the bald eagle, there is no suitable habitat or sightings within or near the project area so there is no effect.

For the valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB), the likelihood it would occur within the project is low because the elderberry bushes are few and isolated. “The VELB prefers areas where elderberry groups are not isolated from each other.” (FWS, November, 1991). Known locations of VELB exit holes on and near the Bass Lake Ranger District support the cited finding.

It is my determination that neither Alternative 1 nor 2 will affect the ELB, or its designated critical habitat because:

- Potentially suitable habitat does lie within or near the project area.
- Elderberry bushes will be protected by a 100’ radius “no spray” zone for herbicide treatment per USDI FWS Conservation Guidelines (1999).
- No other effects to elderberry bushes are expected under this proposal.
- There are no sightings or historical occurrences of VELB in or near the project area.
- No critical habitat has been proposed or designated in or near the project area, or on the Sierra National Forest.

For the **federally listed threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate plant species, the Biological Assessment (BA)**, which is on file at the Bass Lake District Office, determined there would be the following effect on the species potentially present in the project area. The determinations are:

For Mariposa annual pussypaws, no populations have been found in the area during botanical surveys so there is no effect.

For the **Forest Service sensitive wildlife species, the Biological Assessment (BA)**, which is on file at the Bass Lake District Office, determined there would be the following effect on the species potentially present in the project area. The determinations are:

For the Western red bat, it is my determination either Alternative 1 or 2 may affect individuals, but is not likely to result in a trend toward Federal listing or loss of viability for the species because:

- Western red bat habitat may occur within and near the project area, but will not be affected by the proposed project activities.
- Project related disturbances would be small in scope and of short duration and low intensity.

For the **Forest Service sensitive plant species, the Biological Assessment (BA)**, which is on file at the Bass Lake District Office, determined there would be the following effect on the species potentially present in the project area. The determinations are:

### Effects on Fish and Wildlife from Spraying Glyphosate and a Surfactant:

The foregoing sections on water quality, soil productivity and human health and safety plus information in SERA, 1996 are the basis for describing the direct effects to fish and wildlife from glyphosate and R-11 or \_\_\_\_\_.

Direct Effects: No direct effects are expected to occur because the spray would not be applied to fish and wildlife unless an accident occurs or project design features are not followed. The VMFEIS (1988) on pages 4-43 to 4-45 describes an analysis of direct effects to wildlife such as rubbing against or eating treated vegetation and concludes none are likely to occur.

R-11 which is one surfactant that would be used with glyphosate is labeled for application to water and has a history of satisfactory use in aquatic situations by California agencies such as the Dept. of Water Resources and the Dept. of Boating and Waterways. Testing of R-11 has been limited because none is required by EPA and the Dept. of Pesticide Regulation only requires testing on fish and insects. The Dept. of Fish and Game is studying the effects of the Rodeo formulation of glyphosate and R-11 on frog and fish larvae in conjunction with testing control strategies for giant cane. The initial results show no significant mortality to larval frogs.

\_\_\_\_\_ which is one surfactant that would be used with glyphosate is \_\_\_\_\_.

Indirect and Cumulative Effects: There is little risk to fish and wildlife if glyphosate is applied at the recommended rate. The toxicity is extremely low because it is highly water soluble, so does not bioaccumulate, and because the mode of action is by inhibiting the formation of the amino acid phenylalanine. This is one of the essential amino acids, which cannot be synthesized by animals, so it is affecting a process only carried on by plants (Newton and Knight, 1981). Few studies have been done on the effects of glyphosate formulated as Accord on amphibians and reptiles. We can assume that the effects on amphibians, especially the egg and tadpole stages, are similar to those for fish. Recent studies have shown that some herbicides, but not glyphosate, have an estrogen mimicking effect on reptiles (Raloff 1994). Estrogen and other endocrines are mainly six carbon ring molecules (cyclohexane or benzene) while glyphosate has a distinctly different structure. It is a carbon chain based on a single phosphorous atom so does not have a ring structure. The likelihood of these distinctly different molecules mimicking one another or working in the same lock-and-key relationship is remote.

It is highly unlikely that spraying with glyphosate formulated as Accord and R-11 or \_\_\_\_\_ would be harmful or toxic to fish, amphibians or reptiles except in the case of an accidental spill. Precautions in handling of herbicides, explained in the previous sections, would help to prevent accidental spills.

## VII. INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM

Joanna Clines, Forest Botanist  
Kevin Williams, Bass Lake District Aquatic Biologist  
Connie Popelish, Bass Lake District Archeologist  
Ronald Cummings, Bass Lake District Wildlife Biologist

## VIII. CONSULTATION

California Native Plant Society  
Californians for Alternatives to Toxics  
The Yosemite Area Audubon

## IX. REFERENCES

See \_\_\_\_\_ incorporated by reference in this document. Additional references:

CDFA - California Department of Food and Agriculture, 2003. California Department of Food and Agriculture – Noxious Weed List. Available at <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/weedhome>.

California Native Plant Society, 2001. Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (sixth edition). Rare Plant Scientific Advisory Committee, David P. Tibor, Convening Editor. California Native Plant Society. Sacramento, CA 388 pp. Available at <http://www.cnps.org/rareplants/inventory/inventory.htm>

Newton, Michael and F.B. Knight. 1981. Handbook of Weed and Insect Control Chemicals for Forest Resource Managers. Timber Press.

Raloff, J. 1994. Are environmental “hormones” emasculating wildlife? Science News. Vol. 145, No. 2, Pgs. 17-32.

SERA. 1996. Selected Commercial formulations of Glyphosate - Accord, Rodeo, and Roundup risk assessment final report. Syracuse Environmental Research Associates, Inc. Fayetteville, New York. SERA TR 96-22-02-01b.

## APPENDIX



**MARIPOSA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
& WEIGHTS AND MEASURES**

OFFICE OF AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER/SEALER  
Post Office Box 905, 5009 Fairgrounds Road  
Mariposa, California 95338-0905

Phone (209) 966-2075  
Fax (209) 966-2056  
agcomm@mariposacounty.org

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy**  
5039 Fairgrounds Road  
Mariposa, CA 95338

30 August 2010

Subject: **Support for Upper Merced River Watershed Council Proposal to the  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy for Proposition 84 Grants Program –  
Interagency Invasive Weed Management Project**

On behalf of the Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, I want to express my strong support for the ***Proposition 84 Grants Program Interagency - Invasive Weed Management Project*** submitted by the Upper Merced River Watershed Council. The overall objective of the project is to enhance invasive noxious weed management in the Merced River riparian corridor through stronger communication and cooperation between the Upper Merced River Watershed Council and various stakeholders such as the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service (Sierra and Stanislaus National Forests), and Yosemite National Park. This grant is a vital component in protecting California's environment and agriculture from invasive plant species.

Invasive noxious weeds pose one of the greatest ecological threats to California waterways. Effective management of invasive weed species requires strategies that encompass geographic, not political boundaries. Building on a long partnership with the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service and expanding a partnership with Yosemite National Park, the Upper Merced River Watershed Council proposes to manage Yellow Starthistle and Italian Thistle, monitor the riparian corridor for A & B-rated invasive noxious weeds, and expand the mapping of invasive noxious weeds in the riparian corridor of the Wild and Scenic Merced River across agency boundaries.

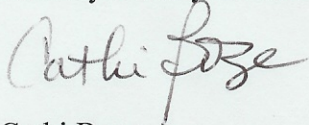
These grants have been effective because they bring together diverse land management stakeholders at the local level. These stakeholders include public agency representatives, NGOs, and private landowners, and the structure that has been set up generates solid local buy-in and coordination for invasive noxious weed control projects. Grants provided for on-the-ground projects leverage a 3:1 match in additional funding and in-kind contributions.



In Mariposa County our main goal has been to reduce the amount of public and privately held acreage infested with yellow starthistle and tocalote throughout the county. This has been accomplished through projects that detect and control invasive noxious weeds on county and state as well as federal property, GPS and map their distribution in the county, and educate landowners and the general public about the threats invasive noxious weeds pose. The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors has recognized California Weed Awareness Week in the third week in July each year with a slogan patterned after that of the Almond Board of "*A weed a day, that's all we ask.*" Our County's Integrated Weed Management team includes the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, Cal Trans, Sierra and Stanislaus National Forests, Merced Irrigation District, the Upper Merced River Watershed Council, Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Yosemite National Park, Mariposa County Farm Bureau, Mariposa County Public Works, Mariposa County Resource Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of California Cooperative Extension, and the Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner. With all of our partners working together, we have been able to pool equipment, labor, and knowledge to combat invasive noxious weed infestations throughout the county.

All of these cooperative effort weed management projects and many others are crucial in order to protect the biodiversity of California, to protect agriculture, to protect open space, and to protect the environment. Invasive noxious weeds are a threat to the State's critical infrastructure and we need projects such as the Invasive Weed Management Project proposed by the Upper Merced River Watershed Council to vanquish them and protect our natural resources and environment.

Thank you for your kind attention,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Cathi Boze". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cathi" and last name "Boze" clearly distinguishable.

Cathi Boze  
Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner



**Yosemite Area Audubon Society  
4540 Ashworth Road  
Mariposa, CA 95338**

September 2, 2010

To: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Re: The Upper Merced River Watershed Council 2011-2013 Category 1 Grant  
Application for Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor

As president of the Yosemite Area Audubon Society, I am writing in support of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's application for the upcoming round of funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

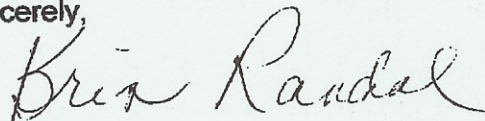
The watershed coordinators, operating under DOC grant funds, have provided the watershed with both leadership and visibility. Through their many outreach efforts, they have established a viable watershed organization in the community. The work of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council (UMRWC) has resulted in a strong stakeholder/volunteer base and measurable success in several areas, including invasive removal.

Based on research compiled by the California Invasive Plant Council, continued integrated weed management is essential to make a significant impact on the infestations in the watershed.

The Yosemite Area Audubon Society has presented talks and provided walks for Upper Merced River Watershed Council stakeholder events, and the two organizations have collaborated on educational presentations to the community by other individuals and groups.

The UMRWC has achieved great success in advancing a community-based watershed approach. I strongly urge your funding this grant proposal.

Sincerely,



Kris Randal  
President  
Yosemite Area Audubon Society





**United States Department of the Interior**  
**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Mother Lode Field Office  
5152 Hillsdale Circle  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762  
[www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode](http://www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode)



CA-180  
2600

Mr. Jim Branham  
Executive Director  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

RE: Upper Merced River Watershed Council 2011-2013 Category 1 Grant Application  
for Invasive Weed Management in Merced River Corridor

Dear Jim:

As Field Manager of the Mother Lode Field Office of the Bureau Land Management (BLM), I am writing in support of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's (UMRWC) application for the upcoming round of funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. The BLM has partnered on numerous very successful projects with the UMRWC since its inception in 2001.

Together BLM and UMRWC have provided educational stakeholder meetings, training for rafting guides, informative programs at the BLM campgrounds, and numerous projects for volunteers.

Perhaps most importantly, BLM and UMRWC have worked together to substantially eradicate invasive weeds from seven miles of the Briceburg Road. Neither entity could have accomplished this alone. Based on research compiled by the California Invasive Plant Council, continued integrated weed management is essential to make a significant impact on invasive weeds in the watershed. It is crucial to continue this important work to help protect this Limestone Salamander Area of Critical Environmental Concern as well as other rare and endangered plant species. I support funding this proposal.

We look forward to continuing our active partnership with the UMRWC during this next grant cycle. The BLM has and will continue to provide coordination and supervision of volunteer and contract labor in the battle against invasives along the river corridor.

The BLM commits to maintaining control once invasive weeds in this project are eradicated.

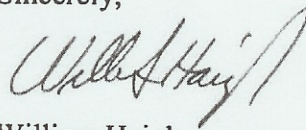


The minimum in-kind technical assistance we will provide is:

- Two weeks of GS-11 coordination and supervision @ \$1,800 per week = \$3,600.
- Five weeks of GS-9 coordination and supervision @ \$1,400 per week = \$7,000
- Four weeks of GS-5 coordination and supervision @ \$ 700 per week = \$2,800

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'William Haigh', written in a cursive style.

William Haigh  
Mother Lode Field Manager  
Bureau of Land Management





**Chowchilla Red Top  
Resource Conservation District  
Post Office Box 531  
Chowchilla, CA 93610**



September 7, 2010

To: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Re: Upper Merced River Watershed Council <sup>2011-13 CAT.</sup> ~~2008-09 SOG~~ 1 Grant Application for Invasive  
Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor

To Whom it May Concern:

The Chowchilla Red Top Resource Conservation District fully endorses the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's efforts and application for invasive weed control funding. It is our mission to provide education and technical guidance in sustainable resource conservation and management to our communities and landowners and managers both current and future. We feel that the Upper Merced River Watershed Council shares our ideals for the education of stakeholders in these areas.

Our organization is concerned about the management of ground and surface water in both the valley and the foothills. This includes identifying and reducing contaminants to water sources, protecting soil resources and water quality, and fuel and invasive weed management for sustainable watershed health. We have worked hard to educate the communities that we all need to work together. Our first step to move forward with regional management was to sign an MOU with the Mariposa County Resource Conservation District and, in effect, the Upper Merced River Watershed Council in 2006 to have our adjoining watersheds work together.

This has been a worthwhile partnership based on shared goals and values in our two watersheds. We hope you will give this grant application your full consideration for funding.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Habben  
Associate Director  
Chowchilla Red Top RCD





**Central Sierra Watershed Committee  
Jeannie Habben, Facilitator/Coordinator  
Post Office Box 1061, Coarsegold, CA 93614  
559-642-3263**

September 7, 2010

To: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Re: Upper Merced River Watershed Council 2011-2013 Category 1 Grant Application for Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor.

To Whom it May Concern:

The Central Sierra Watershed Committee (CSWC) fully endorses the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's efforts and application for invasive weed control funding, and we are pleased to continue our partnership with the Upper Merced River Watershed Council.

The mission of the CSWC is to promote the quality, quantity and aesthetic values of our water resources through the conservation and restoration of our watersheds. The major goal of the CSWC is to create partnerships using a collaborative approach to find solutions for improving our watersheds. The Upper Merced River Watershed has partnered with the CSWC since the spring of 2001. It has been the goal of the Upper Merced River Watershed to bring all the various stakeholders together from private and public sectors.

Together the stakeholders are developing a cooperative alliance where issues, concerns and knowledge is being shared, creating a functioning Upper Merced River Watershed Council. The Upper Merced River Watershed and the CSWC have been and will continue to work cooperatively to plan and improve our watersheds.

Our organization, Central Sierra Watershed Committee, supports the efforts of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council and appreciates their coordination and outreach efforts along with all of their hard work on the ground. We will offer our assistance wherever we can because we are committed to participating in any efforts in the Upper Merced River Watershed.

I hope you will give this project your full consideration for funding.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Habben  
Facilitator/Coordinator  
Central Sierra Watershed Committee

\*\*\*\*\*

*Covering the foothills of Mariposa, Madera, and Fresno Counties*



**MARIPOSANS FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENT AND  
RESPONSIBLE  
GOVERNMENT**

BOX 2121, MARIPOSA, CA 95338

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September 2, 2010

To: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

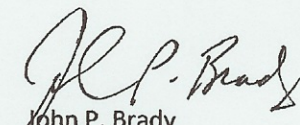
Re: The Upper Merced River Watershed Council 2010-2013 Category 1 Grant Application for Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor

As Chair of Mariposans for the Environment and Responsible Government (MERG), I am writing in support of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's application for the upcoming round of funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

The Coordinators, operating under DOC Grant funds, have provided the Watershed with both leadership and visibility. Through their many outreach efforts, they established a viable watershed organization in the community. The work of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council (UMRWC) has resulted in a strong stakeholder/volunteer base and measurable success in several areas, including invasive removal. Based on research compiled by the California Invasive Plant Council, intense, integrated weed management is essential to make a significant impact on the infestations in the watershed.

MERG is very concerned about the present and future use of both land and water within Mariposa County. So we are pleased that the Watershed Council shares these concerns and we have and will cooperate with them, whenever there are opportunities.

The UMRWC has achieved great success in advancing a community-based watershed approach. I strongly urge the funding this grant proposal.

  
John P. Brady  
Chair, MERG





IN REPLY REFER TO:  
N14 (YOSE-RMS)

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park

P. O. Box 577

Yosemite, California 95389

To: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

From: Niki Stephanie Nicholas, Ph.D., Chief, Resources Management and Science

Re: The Upper Merced River Watershed Council 2011-2013 Category 1 Grant Application  
for Invasive Plant Management in the Merced River Corridor

I am writing this letter in support of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's (UMRWC) application for the upcoming round of funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. The National Park Service has worked with the UMRWC for nine years and we appreciate how the UMRWC has demonstrated professionalism and commitment to excellence.

Through their many outreach efforts, the Council's coordinators established a viable watershed organization in the community. The work of the UMRWC has resulted in a strong stakeholder/volunteer base and measurable success in several areas, including invasive plant removal.

Yosemite National Park has been pleased to participate as a partner in the work of the Watershed. Numerous NPS staff serves as water quality volunteers in the Watershed's citizen monitoring programs, and the Resources Management and Science Division yearly offers its invasive plant control crew to assist with Italian thistle removal. In addition, NPS staff has provided substantial technical advice over the years. We look forward to continuing all these relationships in the future.

The proposed work area is immediately downstream of Yosemite National Park. It ties in with our ongoing work on Italian thistle and yellow starthistle and therefore will significantly decrease the potential of these species to reinvade Yosemite National Park.

The UMRWC has been immensely successful in its on-the-ground work, and our collective integrated weed management efforts are critical in retaining the spectacular native plant communities in the Merced River canyon, and I urge you to fund this proposal. Yosemite National Park is looking forward to continuing our active partnership with the UMRWC during this next grant cycle by providing:

Technical assistance related to invasive plant population mapping protocols and technology, and by providing staff to supervise intermittently field crews hired by UMRWC to handpull and mowing invasive plants.

Signed

Date

## United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Mariposa LPO  
5009 Fairgrounds Rd  
P.O. Box 746  
Mariposa, Ca 95338  
(209)966-3431  
Fax (209)742-7508

September, 2010

To: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Re: The Upper Merced River Watershed Council 2011-2013 Category 1 Grant Application for Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor 2011-2013

As District Conservationist of the Natural Resource Conservation Service, I am writing in support of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's application for the upcoming round of funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. In the nine years of our work together, the UMRWC has demonstrated professionalism and commitment to excellence.

The UMRWC is an established, recognized watershed organization in the community. Nine years of work by the UMRWC have resulted in a strong stakeholder/volunteer base and measurable success in several areas.

Various treatments for invasive weeds have been investigated, tested, and adopted or rejected. The demonstration project on the Merced River Wild & Scenic trail illustrates success in the elimination of invasives. Volunteers have committed to further weed removal and additional restoration projects. Based on research compiled by the California Invasive Plant Council, continued, integrated weed management is essential to make a significant impact on the infestations in the watershed. I strongly urge funding of this grant proposal.

I agree to give in-kind services for GIS, GPS Soils and Weed Mapping analysis with recommendations to the Upper Merced River Watershed Council for their work in the restoration along the Merced River.

- 32 Hours of GIS field mapping technician @ \$18/hour total \$576
- 40 Hours of technical expertise and map inventory and design @ \$50/hr total \$2000

We look forward to continuing our active partnership with the UMRWC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dawn Afman".

Dawn Afman, District Conservationist  
USDA-NRCS







SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE

*Keeping light in the range.*

September 1, 2010

To: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Re: The Upper Merced River Watershed Council 2010 Category 1 Grant Application for Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's application for the upcoming round of funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. The Upper Merced River Watershed Council is a community-based collaborative watershed-focused organization. Stakeholders in the Upper Merced Watershed have been meeting since 2001.

The majority of the Upper Merced Watershed is managed by state and federal agencies with 85% of the land held in the public trust. The Upper Merced River Watershed Council has been the most successful vehicle within the watershed to bring diverse stakeholders together to collaboratively address watershed and natural resources issues on both public and private land.

Over the past 9 years, the Upper Merced River Watershed Council has proven capable of tackling issues and projects on a collaborative basis and demonstrating that they are a results driven group. The Council has:

- In partnership with BLM, USFS, NPS, reduced invasives on a 2.5 mile stretch of the Wild and Scenic Trail through various methods of eradication
- Restored a 3.5 mile stretch of the South Fork Trail
- Provided docents for the Hites Cove trail during wildflower season
- In partnership with SNA, MCRCD, BLM, Yosemite Area Audubon Society, Merced River Alliance, NPS, UC Berkeley, CA Academy of Science, CA Native Plant Society, Mariposa Master Gardeners, and others, presented numerous informational stakeholder meetings and annual Day In the Watershed events
- Developed a successful citizen water quality monitoring program of 24 volunteers that has compiled and interpreted baseline water quality data for 7 years
- Implemented a bioassessment monitoring program of 18 volunteers monitoring four sites twice yearly

The Sierra Nevada Alliance over the past four years has provided organizational, technical and financial assistance to the Upper Merced River Watershed Council. Through a federal grant the Alliance assisted the Upper Merced River Watershed Council in starting a volunteer water quality-monitoring program. We provided the group with trainings, monitoring equipment and overall



organizational monitoring program set-up. The Council has proven to be more than capable monitoring 13 sites on the Merced River for the past seven years on a quarterly basis. The Council has 24 dedicated volunteers evaluating the health of their local landscape. Over the past seven years, these committed volunteers have felt a sense of empowerment in discovering the environmental problems, assessing their extent and then seeing results from their monitoring data.

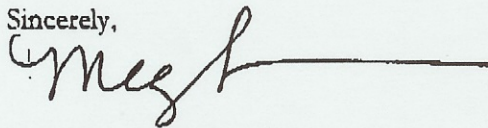
The Sierra Nevada Alliance asks the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to consider offering their support for invasive control work on the Upper Merced watershed. Based on research compiled by the California Invasive Plant Council, intense, integrated weed management will be essential to make a significant impact on the infestations in the watershed.

The Sierra Nevada Alliance has been impressed as a funder and as a partner with the work conducted by the Upper Merced River Watershed Council. They have proven capable of fiscal management, project design and output and engaging critical stakeholders.

Please join the Sierra Nevada Alliance in supporting the efforts of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council in working to preserve and protect the Sierra's mighty watersheds.

We look forward to continuing our active partnership with the UMRWC during this next grant cycle.

Sincerely,



Megan Suarez-Brand  
Watershed Program Director  
Sierra Nevada Alliance





**File Code:** 2080  
**Date:** September 10, 2010

**To:** Jim Branham, Executive Officer  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
115121 Blocker Dr. #205  
Auburn, A 95603

**Subject:** Upper Merced River Watershed Council 2010-2013 Category 1 Grant Application for Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor

As Forest Botanist for the Sierra National Forest, I am writing this letter in support of the Upper Merced River Watershed Council's application for the upcoming round of funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. In the nine years of our work together, the UMRWC coordinators have consistently demonstrated professionalism and commitment to excellence. I believe that the watershed has been tangibly benefited by the work of the UMRWC, especially the weed removal projects which have allowed the native flora to flourish rather than decline.

Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator grant funds provide for leadership and visibility for the UMRWC and have resulted in an established, recognized watershed organization in the community. Nine years of work by the UMRWC have resulted in a strong stakeholder/volunteer base and measurable success in several areas – especially with invasive non-native species. From the beginning of the Watershed Council's work, the Sierra National Forest has provided technical assistance to the Watershed Council in planning for that work, implementing weed control projects, and monitoring results.

Forest Service botanists have worked steadily with the coordinators providing technical information on the various methods for invasive weed management, speaking at public meetings, and leading field trips as part of a multi-agency partnership in the Merced Canyon, and supplying strategic advice on how to apply integrated weed management across an immense watershed effectively (e.g., areas to target and strategies for documenting results.) The significant reduction of yellow starthistle in 2 ½ miles of the Wild and Scenic Trail along the river on Bureau of Land Management lands and expanding the work to the five miles along the Briceburg Road illustrates success of the Council's efforts. The eradication work now includes Italian thistle as well. The coordinators are committed to further invasive weed removal, for which we will gladly continue to provide technical advice. Based on research compiled by the California Invasive Plant Council, continued integrated weed management is essential to significantly reduce infestations in the watershed.

For the new application for a SNC grant, the UMRWC plans to expand its invasive work to address infestations occurring on National Forest lands. This work begun by my agency has suffered from budget cutbacks. We are immensely grateful that the Watershed Council is willing to take on this challenge and expand their work to Incline Road in El Portal. The



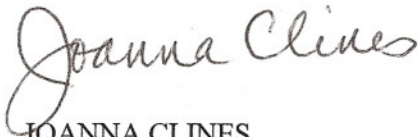
plan is to have crews hand pull YST in the area between the River and the Road, beginning at Foresta Bridge and moving downstream. This area is currently not authorized for herbicide treatments in our 2006 Environmental Assessment for integrated weed control in the (attached).

In addition, crews would perform surveys along the river for YST and other weeds one or more times each year. These early detection surveys will be vital to keeping the Wild and Scenic River corridor free of invasive weeds. In each of the past 3 years, at least one small, new infestation of spotted knapweed or perennial pepperweed has been detected and promptly eradicated by federal agency botanists. Constant vigilance will always be necessary in this heavily used river canyon where new introductions are a fact of life given the number of visitors that travel to this area from weed-infested areas elsewhere, sometimes inadvertently bringing new weeds to our area.

We look forward to continuing our active partnership with the UMRWC during this grant cycle by providing at least the same level of assistance, estimated at: a minimum of 35 hours of technical advice @ \$50/hr = \$1,750 per year for three years. That total would be \$5,250.

The USFS commits to maintaining control once invasive weeds in this project area are eradicated. The Merced River Canyon is one of our high priority areas, and both the Sierra and the Stanislaus National Forests will continue to place a high priority on preventing, detecting, and controlling invasive weeds in this area of high biodiversity and abundant recreational opportunities. This will be necessary in perpetuity but we can confidently commit funds and labor to this area for at least the next ten years.

I strongly urge funding of this grant proposal.



JOANNA CLINES

Forest Botanist

Sierra National Forest

57003 Road 225

North Fork, CA 93643

Phone: 559/877-2218, ext. 3150

Fax: 559/877-3108

email: [jclines@fs.fed.us](mailto:jclines@fs.fed.us)